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THE LESSON OF HISTORY

The North Atlantic Treaty has been hailed by Mr. Bevin as "one of the greatest steps towards world peace which has been taken since the end of the First World War." It marks, he assured Parliament, "the opening of a new era of co-operation and understanding." Inspired by these sanguine sentiments, British newspapers have bidden their readers rejoice in a new-found sense of security. The contention appears to us to require considerable qualification, and the rejoicing to be premature.

First, the question must be asked in what way this Pact, assuming that its signature early next month is followed by ratification on the part of Congress, changes the situation. It is difficult to accept the view that the Treaty marks a dramatic change in American policy or that, within the limits prescribed by the Constitution, the United States is now more definitely committed than ever before to come to the defence of Western Europe, if attacked. It has long been clear that if the Marshall Aid area were the victim of military aggression, the American Government would accept the challenge. What the Pact does is to define more exactly the territorial limits of the United States' security system in the North Atlantic area—limits already adumbrated by existing American bases—and, in fact, to initiate staff talks which, in the event of war, would mean that these bases could be swiftly and effectively reinforced and used.

As such, the Treaty goes far beyond the type of regional defence pact contemplated in the U.N. Charter. Though the Preamble defines the signatories as nations determined to safeguard "the principles of democracy" and the "rule of law"—a definition which must obviously exclude both Greece and Franco Spain—it is fantastic to pretend that the Treaty does not represent something essentially different from the concept of an association of like-minded, neighbouring peoples which underlay originally the project of Western Union. In short, the Treaty is the West's strategic formulation of the principles of a Two-World line-up.

Does the Treaty make the chances of world war more or less remote? The question cannot be answered decisively until we have seen whether the conclusion of the Pact paves or obstructs the way for a peace initiative by either the Western or the Eastern bloc. That the object is to make peace negotiations possible is the contention of the British Foreign Office. If Washington and Moscow can both be induced to accept the view that the consolidation of America's sphere of influence in Western Europe paves the way for a renewal of East-West negotiations as between equals who sincerely want to live, if not in amity, at least at peace with one another, then Mr. Bevin's optimism will be justified. Unhappily, apart from the difficulty of framing an agenda for a "world truce" conference, the immediate effects of the publication of the Treaty have been to focus press discussion on the question, not how the third world war is to be averted, but how that war is to be won.

There are, it is true, sober, warning voices. The U.S. *Journal of Commerce* has expressed grave doubts whether the economy of Western Europe will not founder, and the whole benefit of Marshall Aid be destroyed, if Britain and her Continental neighbours are required to maintain armed forces on a scale which is involved if their territorial integrity is to be safe and not regarded as temporarily expendable in a prolonged conflict between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. In France and elsewhere, anxiety has been voiced as to the far-reaching implications of Article 4, with its reference to threats to "political independence or security." It is not only among Communists that disquiet may well be felt at the implied use of the Treaty as an instrument for the suppression of popular revolt. But these doubts and hesitations are likely to be submerged in a growing volume of public discussions of present and future strengths on mobilisation, of the tenability of the Bremen-Basle line, of deliveries from American or British factories of tanks and aeroplanes, carriers and guns. With the U.S.A. stepping up its production of long-range bombers, it will be difficult to persuade the Russians that these preparations are purely defensive.

Writing in his memorable *Twenty-Five Years*, Earl Grey of Falloden thus stated the bitter lesson of history:—

> Great armaments lead inevitably to war . . . The increase of armaments, that is intended in each nation to produce consciousness of strength and a sense of security, does not produce these effects. On the contrary, it produces a consciousness of the strength of other nations and a sense of fear. Fear begets suspicion and distrust and evil imagining of all sorts . . . it was these that made war [in 1914] inevitable.

History may have once again to record that 1949 was a year of decision. If such slender chances as exist of negotiating a real East-West *détente* are not seized, two great power blocs, facing each other with increasing suspicion and hostility, will both embark on the piling up of armaments whose burden the common man can only be persuaded to shoulder if he is conditioned by every device of propaganda into believing that war is inevitable and that we had best "get it over."

Nothing could be more fallacious than the argument that Western Europe is in the position of a householder who is resolved to protect his possessions by providing his windows with steel shutters. The sort of shutters which the North Atlantic Treaty furnishes are not burglar-proof against Communism. On the contrary, the cost of their erection is likely to make conditions more, rather than less, favourable for the spread of Communist ideas. Throughout discussions of the Pact there seems to run a confusion between aggression by the Red Army, which (if only from prudential motives) Russia would seem highly unlikely to undertake except under great provocation, and the spread of Communism, which existed before the Soviet revolution, rallied 200 million people behind it after the First World War, some 600 million more after the Second, and will continue to advance wherever, as in China, the old social order collapses. Against such an internal enemy military power is no answer.

Mr. Truman's Troubles

President Truman has run into all the difficulties that the pessimists predicted. While he was taking his winter vacation in Florida, the old troublesome alliance between the South and the more conservative Republicans was once more at work to block progressive legislation. Undeterred by the President's threat to stump the country to arouse the electorate against this obstruction, the filibuster went on to victory. Behind the debate on the dignity and power of the Senate—enshrined in Rule Twenty-Two, which prevents any limit being set upon the right of Senators to talk out any measure they dislike—was the determination of the South that, if Mr. Truman wanted to start his new term by picking a fight on his civil rights programme, all the rest of the legislative proposals of the Fair Deal should wait their turn. Naturally, this pleased sufficient Republicans, twenty-three in all, to block the suggested reform of the Senate Rules. Some of these Republicans, pressed by the real-estate lobby, hoped to finish rent-controls, due to expire at the end of the month unless renewed; others have no use for the Fair Deal anyway. Mr. Truman certainly helped his critics by asking for a limitation on debate so drastic that even the compromise proposal, accepted by the Democratic leadership in the Senate, was lost in the ensuing uproar. At the same time, the Senate chose to rub salt in the President's wounds by refusing to endorse the nomination of his close friend Mon Wallgren to the National Security Resources Board. The session is moving on quickly, yet Congress has so far proved just as unwilling as its predecessor—the butt of Mr. Truman's election campaign—to co-operate with the President. It is not clear what the President can now do. The initiative is fast slipping from his hands, and his whole liberal programme is endangered. The head-on attack has failed. Will Mr. Truman prove as skilful as Mr. Roosevelt in the strategy of indirect approach?

Elections in France

The Government parties in France have profited from the postponement of the cantonal elections. In the first round, last Sunday, the Centre coalition has just managed to scrape together enough votes to top the combined total of the Opposition, Gaullist and Communist, although both these groups individually polled more than any single party in the coalition. Thanks to the network of electoral alliances, the Socialists, Radicals, M.R.P. and their satellite groups picked up 320 of the 723 contests decided, and will probably maintain this lead in the run-off for the 785 that remain. The Communists, fighting on their own without the understanding with the Socialists they had in the past, polled some 400,000 more votes than the Socialists but won only seventeen seats, as against a Socialist score of 108. Since only a proportion of the cantonal seats fell vacant, and there was no contest in the Seine, where the Communists are strong, it appears that the Communists are still able to mobilise a respectable vote, not much smaller than their peak at the Parliamentary elections. The Gaullists, however, have lost some ground, though they remain the largest single party. M. Queille can feel fairly satisfied with the results; but the margin over the Opposition is small for a Government which is a coalition for mutual survival rather than for a positive programme.

The Gap Widens

The currency dispute was never the root cause of the Berlin crisis, but for more than a year it has been one of the chief sources of friction between East and West. After direct negotiations with the Russians had failed, a committee of Uno mediators sought a compromise and found its efforts frustrated by more fundamental disagreements. Now the three Western Powers have abandoned all hope of settling the currency problem and have made the West German mark the only legal tender in their Sectors of the city. This decision eliminates many anomalies which had been produced by the temporary expedient of accepting both the East and West marks in the Western Sectors. Up to this week, most wages have been paid in the Soviet Zone currency. West marks, for those who could get them, were required for personal services, unrationed goods and the like. Among other things, this system created a lively black market in the West currency. Now, only the West mark is to be used, and the unfortunates who live in the Western Sectors and work in the Russian-controlled part of the city, and conversely, will be allowed to convert a portion of their earnings into the appropriate currency. The new decision widens the gap between East and West. It serves notice on the Russians—as the German civil authorities in the Western Sectors have for some time been urging—that the Western Powers do not intend to surrender on the currency question, for such surrender would give the Russians economic control over the life of the city. At the same time, it means that more reliance must be placed upon the airlift, for this decision means a further reduction in the flow of goods from the Soviet to the blockaded Sectors.

National Parks

The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Bill is in many respects disappointing to those who had hoped that the recommendations of the Hobhouse Committee would, in substance, be accepted. The Hobhouse Report may have gone too far in suggesting that local planning authorities should have only a minority representation on Park Committees; but the Bill, as drafted, appears to tilt the scales unduly in favour of local interests. It is not only that a bare quarter of the members of the various Park Committees will be "national" appointments; the status and powers of the National Parks Commission itself are gravely watered down. It will not appoint the "national" members of the local committees (they will owe their position to the Minister); it will have a small expert staff and must be consulted on planning and management policy by local committees; but, if its advice is ignored, its only recourse will be appeal to the Minister. Funds required for "development" in national parks will be under the control, not of the National Commission, but of the local authorities, who will have the right to invoke a 75 per cent. Exchequer grant. If the local committees pursue a policy of masterly inactivity in the provision of camping sites and other accommodation for urban holiday-makers, the National Commission once again can do no more than protest to the Minister. He can, indeed, exercise default powers under the general provisions of the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act; and he may also buy and dispose of land, should he decide that its acquisition is necessary to carry out the purposes of the Bill. But though the National Commission, which will publish annual reports, may act as a channel for giving expression to public discontent if local authorities are half-hearted in their approach to the conception of national parks, the fact that the Commission is shorn of powers of direction or of control of expenditure gives little promise either that it can compel initiative or stand up effectively to the rival claims of land-using Government Departments.

Need for Amendments

Equally disappointing to those who have campaigned for revision of the present anomalous regulations governing public access to open country is Mr. Silkin's decision to put the Hobhouse Committee's recommendations on this matter "into reverse." The Hobhouse Report proposed that the onus for excluding the public from uncultivated land should be placed, in effect, on landowners: local authorities would have been required to designate on maps all the "open country" in their areas, and the public would have had access to it except in cases in which an owner's objections were upheld after a public inquiry. Reversing this procedure, the Bill relies on the method of voluntary agreement between landowners and local authorities, subject to elaborate provisions for compensation for depreciation of land made accessible. Only if this cumbrous "case by case" procedure results in final disagreement will the Minister have the power to make a compulsory Access Order. We trust this well-intentioned measure will be revised in Committee so as to strengthen the powers of the National Parks Commission, and thus to ensure that the Commission is not merely a consultative watchdog over the public interests but the fulcrum for setting in motion the admirable project to which the Government is now giving its blessing.

Farm Prices

If the consumer has had unpleasant news in the shape of a further cut in the meat ration, the British producer of food will find little of which to complain in the revised list of guaranteed farm prices now announced by the Minister of Agriculture. There is an all-round upward revision of the prices of crops for harvesting in 1949, and there are to be further increases in respect to the 1950 harvest. Additionally, the guaranteed prices for meat, notably in the case of fat pigs, are scaled up. The National Farmers' Union protests mildly that the higher prices will not "cover completely" the increased costs due to the recent concession of higher minimum wages to farm labour; but the general impression conveyed by the revised price list is that the reasonably efficient farmer will be "sitting pretty," and the small man and the "family farmer," with few or no hired workers can congratulate themselves on a windfall. Encouragement of greater production of home-grown food is obviously essential; agriculture cannot be based on under-paid labour; and there is an urgent need for further modernisation of farm buildings and plant—all of which implies that farmers must be kept above subsistence level and that, directly or indirectly, the consumer must foot the bill. From an electoral standpoint it is doubtless sound tactics on the Government's part to convince the farming community, and particularly the small man, that the "the land" is having a square deal. The danger, however, is that, if every increase in labour costs is to be followed automatically by an upward revision of guaranteed prices, the incentive towards greater efficiency may disappear.

Specialists' Salaries

As the *Lancet* says, "Who would have predicted that a Socialist Government would have been prepared to pay specialists up to £2,750 a year for all, and up to £5,250 for those of special distinction?" Who indeed! And who would have predicted that a Labour Government would have been prepared heavily to subsidise "privateers"? In the terms and conditions for medical and dental staffs in hospitals the part-time specialist is financially favoured as against the whole-timer; and the Socialist Medical Association, which has consistently taken its stand for a full-time salaried service, is concerned (to put it mildly) at the discrimination. There is no doubt that the scales for all parties concerned are generous. There are talent rates for the exceptional. But the young and struggling hospital doctor is also provided for. Junior house officers in the past, after the expense of qualifying, have been expected to give virtually free service; they are now to have a useful starting salary of £350. Specialist trainees, who traditionally have got to Harley Street the hard way, are now to get at least £670 a year, rising (still as trainees) to £1,300. It at least means that they will be able to marry earlier, but there is a danger of encouraging premature specialisation. While it is obviously necessary to recruit the best talents for the hospital services, the proposed scales cause some misgiving. They have to be met out of the budget of the hospital boards, and Mr. Bevan has just reduced that by £9,000,000. There is a danger that the service may be impaired either by numerical reductions in staffs or by cuts in essential services to meet the specialists' salaries.

Railwaymen's Wages

All the tribunals appealed to have now rejected the Railwaymen's demand for a rise in wages. The reason given is that, in face of falling revenue, wages cannot be raised without increasing fares and freight-rates, the effect of which might be a further fall in railway traffic. As the nationalised services are under instruction to pay their own way, as far as this can possibly be managed, those in control of them could hardly avoid resisting the claims. The decision, however, rested not with them, but with the various arbitrators who had to pronounce on the sectional claims into which the railwaymen's general claim was broken up. The arbitrators no doubt acted largely under the influence of the "wages stop" doctrine, arguing that the railway workers had not been able to make out a case that fell within the exceptions allowed for in the White Paper. Widespread discontent is to be anticipated at the result of the rejection of the claims, though they were not expected to be met in full. The railway workers are in many instances receiving wages barely sufficient (unless overtime is deliberately worked) for subsistence; and they are not too well pleased with the new management. Their desire for representation on the controlling Boards is likely to be reinforced. They are, however, unlikely to take drastic action; probably they will now propose new, less ambitious claims in a form which will be less open to outright rejection—for example, a claim for higher Saturday and other special payments on the analogy of the concessions recently made to the London busmen. Their attitude, however, will not be unaffected by the forthcoming Budget: the Government's policy in respect of wages will remain tenable only as long as it can convince the main body of the workers that other forms of income—to say nothing of accumulated capital—are not receiving unduly favourable treatment.

Bans and Purges

In a week which has brought news that a Cheshire local authority has sacked a typist because of her membership of the Communist Party, that a group of London department stores are now considering a loyalty purge of their employees (presumably lest they sabotage the sales of pink lingerie) and that Sardar Patel has declared in a speech that he does not intend to "allow one Communist in Hyderabad to remain alive," it is fittng that the United States should have crowned the follies committed in the name of democracy by rescinding the visas granted to four British delegates to the World Peace Conference in New York. Professor Bernal is openly a Communist as well as one of the most brilliant living scientists. Mr. Louis Golding is very obviously not a Communist. Was the ban based on the fact of having been to the Conference of Intellectuals at Wroclaw—a city which the U.S. Consulate apparently believes to be in Russia? Perhaps the word "intellectuals" was too much for the American authorities; it has the same effect on some people that culture used to have on Göring. That explanation will not hold, because Mr. Olaf Stapledon's visa is apparently not cancelled. Since the ban on delegations to the New York Conference is being exercised also in the case of France, Italy and Brazil, the anomalous result seems likely to be that almost the only foreign delegates attending will be from the "wrong" side of the Iron Curtain. The Russian delegation had no difficulty in obtaining visas. Can it be that the State Department is reluctant to give New Yorkers an opportunity of learning that there are any elements West of the Iron Curtain who decline to see the Two Worlds in terms of unrelieved black and white?

PARLIAMENT: No Flags for May Day

Chuter Ede is a liberal Home Secretary. That is to say, if the Communists took power, he might be shot; if the Fascists succeeded, he might be slowly strangled. He therefore views each with a tolerance qualified by the belief that Home Secretaries should die in bed. Let other countries keep their Ministers of the Interior! Ede is a good-humoured man with the just combination of domesticity and stiffness that his title suggests. At the despatch-box he ploughs through his answers, a surly twinkle in his eye, determined, as he said on Monday, to discharge his two public duties of equal importance—"to preserve order and to maintain the traditional liberties of the subject."

When Crookshank rose to ask him a Private Notice Question about Sunday's disturbances, he delivered himself of what he was later to call a "colourless" description of the battle. The essence of the story was that, after the British Union procession had been smuggled from its announced route into side streets, its thwarted opponents attacked the police with milk bottles, lumps of concrete, clods of earth, hurricane lamps and whatever else was movable and available. Following the advice of the Police Commissioner, the Home Secretary now proposed a three months' ban for all processions.

Members heard the statement with indignation at the attack on the police, who were doing their duty to preserve order and the right of procession; yet some were made uneasy by the gaps in the Home Secretary's account. When Crookshank asked whether the disturbances were caused by what "the Rt. Hon. Gentleman called 'their opponents,' which I assume to be the Communist Party," the Home Secretary replied that the meeting's organisers carried out to the full the instructions given them by the police, and the trouble was caused by the people who were opposed to the holding of the procession.

This reply reduced the "colourlessness" of the Home Secretary's statement to stark black and white; and several Labour Members rose to challenge Chuter Ede's over-simplification. Harold Davies complained of his "euphemistic approach," since the British Union is, of course, Mosley's Union of Fascists. No amount of dehydration will make it anything else.

As the questions followed each other, a quaint picture of the Fascist demonstration emerged—pacific, obedient and wending its way through North and East London districts where large numbers of Jews live, in the hope of converting them to Fascism. The Tory Strauss made the increasingly common error of equating hostility to Fascism with Communism. After Chuter Ede had said that marbles and ball-bearings had been thrown in order to dismount the police, and Harold Davies had referred to Britain's support of the Charter of Human Rights, Strauss sneeringly attributed the suggestion to Davies that the marble-throwers were demonstrating their belief in human rights.

Nor was the Home Secretary himself without fault in the assumptions he made. He retorted sharply to Silverman that Britain "spent six years in order to combat Fascism, but did not spend six years in order to establish Communism." The Home Secretary would have done well to differentiate between organised violence, which he attributed to the Communists, and the resentment and sense of outrage which, as Bramall, Medlicote and Silverman pointed out, are provoked by Fascist processions.

All the questions seemed to have been asked, and Mr. Speaker was about to pass on to the next business, when suddenly Glanville, a rarely-heard Member and an ex-miner, stood up and said—with a genuinely baffled air—"We spent six years trying to resist Fascism. Why should we allow it to be recognised? Why not kill it at once?"

But that was to misunderstand the nature of liberal democracy which precludes discriminatory laws, and must tolerate warily its intended assassins. Only later in the day did Members realise that the Communists had succeeded in banning Fascist processions; that the Fascists had succeeded in banning Labour processions; and that the Home Secretary had been forced to ban them all.

Maurice Edelman

WEST AND EAST

The special British envoys now visiting Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Ceylon, India, South Africa and Canada have the natural and desirable objective of following up last October's Commonwealth Conference. The timing of their visit, however, is clearly dictated by the rapidity of events in Asia; a social revolution is developing in different forms and at different tempos in every part of that continent. Is the object of our envoys to attempt to stem the tide of revolution? Or is it to recognise the urgent need of great social change, and to seek ways and means of friendly co-operation? They declare, we believe sincerely, that they seek a formula to reflect a new and better conception of Empire. There is a danger that what they are actually creating is nothing more than a new series of alliances among nations conveniently placed for the strategic encirclement of the revolutionary heartland of Asia.

It is true, as Dr. Evatt has pointed out, that five out of the eight members of the Commonwealth are located in South-East Asia and the Western Pacific, and that there has thus been "an important geographical shift in the balance of the group." But the internal politics of those countries cannot be overlooked; indeed, the social problems within countries on the Asian mainland are such that their evolution may well complicate and even overshadow the agreements now under discussion with the leaders of the Governments concerned. Australia and New Zealand may be cushioned against untoward developments in Asia for some time to come; but they cannot ignore the fact that the political tranquillity and economic prosperity they are now enjoying cannot continue indefinitely if the rest of the Pacific zone is faced with economic chaos.

The idea that finding more persuasive constitutional forms for the Empire can serve as a way of successfully counteracting the influence of Communism is foolish. It make no appeal to the peasant, whose notions of the West are based on his own experience of Western domination. Intricate formulae, however ingeniously phrased, about the evolutionary processes of Commonwealth relations may sound well in Parliamentary announcements. The peasant—and he accounts for about three-quarters of Asia's population, excluding Australia and New Zealand—wants land and rice, peace and human dignity. The concept of Empire may have become more liberal—and the British Government genuinely stands for fundamental changes in this connection—but there is a heritage of exploitation which the most skilful propaganda cannot undo. Ultimately, if it is to be a success, policy must satisfy the needs of the common people. This axiom is doubly true in countries which have either won their independence or are on the point of winning it.

Looked at from this point of view, the idea of a Pacific Defence Pact is not a constructive policy and it is no answer to the appeal of Communism. It gives an impression of panic. It can do nothing to raise the standard of living of the peoples of Asia. It offers guns where agricultural machinery is needed. It implies atom-bomb sites where countries are in urgent need of irrigation dams. If any proof were needed that military aid cannot defeat Communism, it is found in the complete failure of American policy in China. There is no reason to believe that a Western-sponsored Defence Pact, of which military aid would be an inescapable part, would produce different results in other parts of Asia, though the process might be slower.

Because it is customary nowadays to put a Communist label on any policy or on any organisation which advocates independence or social change, it is often pre-supposed that the Communist Parties of India and of South-East Asia have acquired the dominant political leadership. This is not the case. The Communist Party has won control in the Vietnamese Republic because Communists have headed resistance in the war which French Imperialism has forced on them, and because they have co-operated in a broad nationalist front. Elsewhere, the party line of open rebellion, adopted at the Calcutta Conference last March, has led, in Burma, to a chaotic situation in which a small Communist group has exploited Karen nationalism; in Malaya, to organised political terrorism; in the Indonesian Republic, to irresponsible rebellion; and, in India, to unsuccessful strikes in industrial areas. In every case, the more moderate Communist leaders have recognised the setback to indigenous Communism forced on them from outside; and many potential Communists see that the parties, as at present directed, are not based on the will of the people and lead to abortive struggle.

At the same time, it must be recognised that the politically minded youth of India and South-East Asia are Marxists, and that many of them have been deeply impressed by the success of the Chinese Communists and by Mao Tse-tung's "New Democracy." Such a policy is not incompatible with co-operation with the West, provided that Western co-operation does not involve these countries in a war against the Soviet Union. Thus, in a world of conflicting ideologies and underfed millions, Asia—with its vast resources in man-power and in raw materials—could become a steadying factor and help to restore some equilibrium. But the present concentration on a Pacific Pact only encourages the idea that war is inevitable; it is driving Communist China into a position where the Yangtse becomes the Soviet frontier. American policy is too suspect for such a military pact to be accepted by the countries of South-East Asia. It would be disastrous if a Labour Government in Britain, with its good record in India and parts of South-East Asia, exploited its prestige to encourage members of the Commonwealth to move on to a war footing in the name of an anti-Communist crusade. Has this new conception of Empire nothing better to offer than the doubtful va[illegible] of being allies in a future war?

The time has come to get down to the business of co-operating wherever possible with the peoples of South-East Asia in helping them to rebuild their countries and develop a Socialist economy along their own lines. The Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, which met in Australia last December, passed some useful resolutions which might be taken as a blue-print. This Commission has no executive power. Need it become just another international fact-finding organisation? Is there not a valuable basis in its proposals for discussion by the special envoys now roaming over India and South-East Asia? Or are their talks confined to military problems so that these representatives of a new concept of Empire appear as harbingers of war? Can the political warfare chiefs of the Kremlin be criticised if they exploit these missions as evidence that the West, whose troops are already fighting against the colonial peoples of Indo-China, Indonesia and Malaya, is planning a World War?

The Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East endorsed in principle the need for industrialised countries to assist this area with capital goods and essential materials. The Soviet delegate expressed his support for a Committee on Industrial Development. Other constructive ideas which were discussed included a Bureau for Flood Control—the area is one which has a heavy annual loss in human beings and property from floods—and a plan for providing technical training initiated last December by the I.L.O. Another useful resolution recognised the difficulties of the area in financing imports of capital goods and material essential for economic development, and recommended that Asiatic countries should formulate specific projects with a view to utilizing the facilities available from private investors, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and other credit agencies. These are constructive ideas of functional co-operation. Approached from that angle, the countries of Asia and the Far East can become areas of peaceful development and co-operation with the West instead of ideological and military bomb-sites in a struggle for power.

ESSENTIALS FOR RECOVERY

THE Economic Survey for 1949 has had a somewhat unenthusiastic press: critics have complained, in some cases in a spirit of political partisanship rather than from the objective standpoint of the economic commentator, that the White Paper dwells too much on the undoubted achievements of 1948 and contains too little in the way of forward-looking policy decisions for 1949. There is some substance in these criticisms—particularly perhaps in the complaint that no hint is given in the Survey that steps may have to be taken to correct a deflationary situation, both at home and abroad. Yet, if the authors of the Survey wrote cautiously, and were inclined, as we observed last week, to recommend "the mixture as before," they may be forgiven; for anyone who sets out to describe the extent of Britain's economic recovery and the prospects for the future is well advised to pick his words carefully. Recovery has gone so far—and yet is such a long way off. Our international accounts are so near balancing—and yet the dollar deficit is so intractable. We can afford to consume a little more—and yet we must be so careful not to consume the wrong things. So much has been achieved by sound planning policies—yet so much could go quickly wrong as a result of errors, either on our part or on the part of others.

The more the Survey is studied, the more clearly do certain broad conclusions emerge. If the progress recorded in 1948, and for which the Government is quite unfairly blamed by its critics for taking due credit, is to continue, there are several essentials which we must strive to attain. First, we must take very seriously the task of co-ordinating our own development plans with those of the other Marshall Aid countries. In a recent statement in the House about the results of his talks with M. Petsche on Anglo-French economic co-operation, Sir Stafford Cripps was uninformative and complacent. There had been, he said, "useful" discussions, and both he and the French Finance Minister were very satisfied. There had never been, he added, "any question of any basic principles having to be settled"—a surprising statement in view of the known inconsistencies of the British and French Four-Year Plans, and the failure so far to reconcile Anglo-French differences of opinion as to complementary development of the manufacture of such things as automobiles and tractors. If our export plans are not to be upset by cut-throat competition between our industries and those of our Western European neighbours, all intent on an effort to meet the dollar shortage, a great deal more will have to be done to achieve co-ordination of programmes within the O.E.E.C. framework.

Secondly, it is indisputable that the immediate strain on our international balance of payments, coupled with the fact that we seem likely to be increasingly a channel through which Marshall dollars are passed on to still more necessitous European countries, must not lead us to take a short view of plans for capital development overseas. For our own sake, as well as for that of the colonial peoples, we are justified in taking considerable risks in pressing on with such forms of investment in order both to earn more dollars for the sterling area in the long run, and to foster future non-dollar supplies of foodstuffs and materials for ourselves and our European partners. Equally, there can be no let-up in the programme of capital investment at home. The increased productivity, on whose necessity the Survey rightly dwells, demands not merely increased labour effort and better management, but also new capital equipment.

For example, if—as the Survey implies—there is no likelihood of further important shifts of man-power between industries, so that improved distribution of labour depends mainly on getting new entrants into the right jobs, then housing becomes a high priority in the areas that need more labour, as well as factory building where there are any substantial reserves of labour to be absorbed. Clearly, too, despite consumer shortages, we must have a big investment programme in order to get our industrial equipment into improved shape. The folly of those economists who want capital expenditure to be reduced is evident in a situation in which steadily rising productivity is indispensable if we are to deal with a world market situation in which buyers may soon be in a better position to pick and choose. Indeed, it is probable that the contemplated investment programme for 1949 may not be adequate. The low figure allocated to major projects in coal mining is certainly open to criticism, and if capital investment by private enterprise in the large field over which the State has no control showed signs of flagging, it would certainly be necessary to expand capital investment by Government agencies.

High productivity, however, requires not only better capital equipment but also a willing labour force, to which real inducements must be offered in order to elicit not so much harder work as a greater sense of co-operative responsibility in both the public and private sectors of industry. In 1948, Sir Stafford Cripps pulled off with remarkable success his policy of disinflation without deflation—a policy which depended on a nice adjustment of budget surplus with personal income distribution and control over capital expenditure and bank credit. He managed to restrain wage claims despite full employment, to check dividend disbursements despite very high profits, and to keep capital balances unspent to the degree required for preventing an excessive inflation of demand. Can he go on preserving this somewhat precarious equilibrium? More and more workers are getting restless as they see steep increases in professional and (in the higher ranges) Civil Service salaries; and they cannot fail to observe that profits, if not distributed dividends, are running at fantastically high levels. Prices, outside the narrow range of basic necessities, have risen and are rising; and the more goods there are in the shops the more conscious of frustration becomes the thwarted consumer. Nor is it easy for the man in the street to understand that high profits are, in part, an unavoidable accompaniment of restricted capital expenditure, because the need to keep obsolescent plant in use raises marginal costs and thus presents windfall profits to all the more efficient firms. Let it be granted as a principle that wage rises must be linked to higher production; they must not be so refused as to create discontents that will actually reduce productivity.

It follows that more effort must be directed, not only to spreading a clearer understanding of the country's underlying economic difficulties—towards this the popular version of the Survey makes an admirable contribution—but also to developing much further the methods of consultation and workers' participation in industry, both at workshop level and "higher up." The workers want increased wages to the full extent that they can be afforded; but they want also a clearer assurance that they are being given a fair deal and that they count as human beings, not merely as "factors of production." The demographic position of Great Britain means, more than ever before, that every potential producer is a precious asset that must not be wasted by inconsiderate or unskilful handling. But if much depends on the psychological approach to the problem of labour relations, it is also obvious that a necessary condition of getting the right response from the main body of the people is that wealth should be taxed with the utmost severity. It may be unavoidable, till we can reconstruct our capital equipment on up-to-date lines, that high profits should be reaped by all but the most inefficient firms with little difficulty; but it remains a paradox that this should be tolerated by a Government pledged to reduce economic inequality. The coming Budget will be judged largely by the extent to which it takes steps to remove social injustice.

Thanks to a combination of circumstances, from which the receipt of Marshall Aid can by no means be excluded, we have weathered the crisis which seemed so menacing two years ago. But "recovery" in this narrow sense—as the Chancellor hastened to remind the U.S. Congress after Mr. Mayhew's optimistic remarks—is not enough. The tasks now to be faced are, to an increasing extent, long-term tasks of fundamental reconstruction of our economic life, of international, as well as national, economic planning, and of the use of new techniques of management and drastically revised notions of human relations in industry.

COPENHAGEN DIARY

COPENHAGEN was an excellent centre to be in when the terms of the Atlantic Pact were published. Not that the Danes showed any excitement about it; Danes do not readily show excitement. They have, in common with the other Scandinavians, the signal merit of having forgotten centuries ago the foolish ambitions of power and conquest; their common civilisation provides the only convincing evidence in support of those political philosophers who have assumed the possibility of a society of peaceful and sensible human beings. Though Danes have, I think, more "taste" (in the French sense) than the other Scandinavians, they are rather stolid and complacent; they give no hint of the imaginative possibilities that the Norwegians derive from their mountains. (Could one imagine a Danish or Swedish Ibsen?) The Swedes have the same admirable qualities of reasonableness and common sense, but, perhaps because they were a conquering Power only as recently as the 17th century, they maintain a certain stiff and unresponsive exterior that never permits one to forget that they are Teutons and were once famous soldiers. But all these Powers had apparently put aside for ever the idea of joining any military alliance; and in the '20s and more recently, distinguished writers like Dean Inge were talking about the hope that Britain, with a declining population, might some day be able to join with the Scandinavians in a neutral bloc. As it was, I found myself in Copenhagen talking to Ministers and citizens of all kinds about whether the chance of war had been increased or diminished by our joint decision to become satellites of America. The Swedes stand out of the Pact; and the first thing I learnt from talks with people in many stations of life was that the great majority of Scandinavians would have preferred a defensive bloc, unattached to any Great Power. Danes especially accept the Atlantic Pact with profound misgivings.

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Three factors have, in each case, been decisive in the attitude of the Scandinavian Powers to the Atlantic Pact. The first is geography; the second, economic ties; and the third, experience of the last war. With the Russians in control of the Baltic—the Soviet Zone begins only 30 miles East of Hamburg—Sweden is in no position to quarrel with the Soviet Union. Though her cultural outlook is entirely Western, her economic position is closely linked with Eastern Europe. Finally, remember that Sweden managed to remain neutral in the last war. In the event of another she might still hope to repeat this performance. A capacity to put up a good, if short-lived, resistance, plus immensely valuable supplies of iron ore which she can sell as a neutral, put her into an excellent bargaining position last time. Why not again? If Swedes had guilt-feelings immediately after the war because of the sufferings of her occupied neighbours, they are now evaporated. Her Foreign Minister, Osten Unden, certainly spoke for the overwhelming mass of Swedes when he said that Sweden was against any system that would bring it into the political wrangles of the Great Powers. At the joint talks that were held by the Scandinavian Powers at Karlsted at the beginning of January, the Swedes firmly advocated a defensive "unattached, alliance-free" pact of the three Scandinavian Powers which would aim at neutrality but, if necessary, would buy arms for self-defence. Mr. Lange, the Norwegian Foreign Minister, took the Big Power view that, in these days, security for a small country depends on the arrival of help from a Great Power within an hour of attack. It was on this question of Staff talks that the Karlsted conversations broke down.

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Mr. Lange's decisive argument was that an independent Scandinavian bloc would not be able to look for any aid from America. Mr. Unden did not agree that if a Scandinavian Pact were made, America would refuse to sell arms to it. His view seems to have been shared by the Danish Foreign Minister, Mr. Rasmussen, who said, in a recent speech reviewing the story of the negotiation, that nobody could tell what would have been the effect on the United States if Mr. Lange had been accompanied by the Foreign Ministers of the other two Scandinavian Powers when he visited London and Washington. In short, Sweden and Denmark wanted Scandinavia to unite as a bloc and then make what bargains it could with America; the Norwegian Foreign Minister was so convinced of the necessity of joining the Atlantic Pact that he was unlikely to discover what America would have done if confronted with a resolutely "unattached" Scandinavia.

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Mr. Lange's position is no mystery. Economically and strategically Norway might almost be described as an extension of the British Isles. The ties are very close; they became much closer as a result of the Resistance. Whereas Sweden could argue that she proved that neutrality was still possible, Norway's experience convinced Norwegians of the opposite thesis. The case for the Atlantic Pact is far stronger for Norway than for Sweden. Norway's trade and shipping depend on the Atlantic; her coast can be defended by Britain, which indeed regards it as strategically vital. Mr. Lange held that Scandinavia would be involved in any case in any war, and that the essence of security would be swift defence. In this he carried the Norwegian Labour Party with him, but it is no secret that much opposition to the Pact exists in the Norwegian factories. Though an "unattached" Scandinavian bloc would have pleased everyone, the Atlantic Pact won because Mr. Lange's convictions were reinforced by every encouragement from London and Washington.

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The breakdown of the effort to create an "alliance-free" Scandinavian bloc, which would have been greeted with enthusiasm in Denmark, has left Denmark with no alternative but to follow Norway. The nine Communists in Parliament are, of course, in opposition, and the Radical Party is expected to abstain. The Liberals, Conservatives and Social Democrats will vote solidly for the Pact, not with any song in their hearts, but as a result of a depressed conviction that though it could mean that Washington put them in war, yet they have now an alternative. They hoped, as their Premier said, that there pacifism would give them safety; that bluff was called by the German invasion. Some technical and constitutional difficulties will have to be settled. America has three air bases in Greenland from which Denmark has been trying to persuade America to vacate ever since 1945. The Atlantic Pact presumably means that America will stay there. It will be easier for Danish politicians if the occupation ceases to be purely American and is covered by some general formula of Atlantic security—perhaps bringing in Canadians and others, as well as Americans.

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A reminder that Martin Andersen Nexö the G.O.M. of Danish letters, will soon be 80, set me looking along my shelves for one of his books. I found the last of the *Ditte* trilogy, *Towards The Stars*, in which Nexö's fisher-girl heroine, worn out by a life of poverty, lies dying as a procession of workers carry off the coffin of her small son, killed while scrounging coal. This book is not as gloomy as it sounds. Like the others in the series, and the magnificent *Pelle* story, it is full of the feeling for human dignity and affection that Nexö has always infused into his radicalism. These books, were all written early in this century and the translations, which are now hard to find, are not really satisfying. *Pelle*, certainly, should be re-published in English, for it is a superb example of the way a radical novelist should write about the ordinary folk of his country. Nexö has been a Communist for many years and, during the occupation, he was wanted by the Gestapo. He was hidden for a long time in a public ward of a Copenhagen hospital, disguised as a poor shoemaker. "Quite properly," he told a friend of mine, "for I served my apprenticeship to that trade in the 'Eighties. My family was so poor I ran away from home and, at the age of thirteen, I bound myself to a shoemaker in Ronne, working for fourteen hours a day. I know it sounds like the old story, but I really did learn to read in my attic room at night, covering the windows so the master didn't catch me burning candles." Danes rightly respect Nexö. He knew and understood the people who suffered. Like Gorki in many ways, he has always tempered his militant Communism with compassion.

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In Denmark no housewife ever sees bacon. It is all being exported to Britain. It would be easy to make a list of commodities in the world to-day which seem somehow or other to have disappeared altogether. But one need not worry about food in Copenhagen. Though butter and soap are short and coupons are still given for meals, the Danes appear to me to be eating with all their traditional gusto and satisfaction. Large family parties, celebrating innumerable feast-days, are as much a feature of Danish life as ever. Eighteen months ago, when I was in Denmark, the Danes were disgruntled with the British. To-day, the trade arrangements seem satisfactory. We have reached, I gather, something like a balance between the two countries. As long as this balance exists, it makes little odds that we are heavily subsidising Danish butter before it is sold to the British consumer. The Danes, in fact, are used to exporting their butter and bacon. They have as many eggs and as much cheese and other good things of life as they can eat. In one restaurant I copied down the following dish:

"One whole fried plaice stuffed with newly boiled lobster, mushrooms, shrimps and spinach."

There were many such dishes, but the one that most attracted my attention read "Crips tartlets." If, as I suppose, this refers to junior typists in the Treasury, they seem to me to be in good supply.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of the others printed.

Paste entries on a POSTCARD and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Air Commodore A. V. Harvey, Conservative M.P. for Macclesfield, said at Adlington, Cheshire, last night, "Prize beef from Scotland is going to South Wales, Nottingham and Newcastle-on-Tyne, because the Government want the meat to go where their solid vote exists. That is why they want controls."—*News Chronicle*. (Megan Jones.)

I trust that England knows more of her Bible than to believe a Messiah can come from America.
—Letter in *Daily Mirror*. (W. G. Armstrong.)

Shyness does queer things to people . . . I had an uncle who, at the age of sixteen used invariably to enter a room full of company walking on his hands, or on all fours, barking like a dog.—*Woman's Own.* (C. D. Roberts.)

Charity collecting box at Great Yarmouth, opened yesterday for the first time since 1877 contained 5d.—*Daily Mirror.* (V. A. Overton.)

Arrested and accused of indecency, ——, who was released on bail, went to the river with the intention of committing suicide, police told Brentford magistrates to-day.

Next he went to the river, took off his wooden leg, undressed, and threw himself into the water. Finding the water was too cold, he swam to the other side.—*Evening News.* (H. J. Wilde.)

Monday, March 14, for one week only. Special attraction. Maiden's Prayer. Next Week: Damaged Goods.—Theatre Advt. (Austin Lee.)

LET US NOW BAN FAMOUS MEN

The North Atlantic Pact of mutual aid
  Gives evidence of perfect understanding,
But America's political blockade
    Shows common dedication
    Does not give a delegation
Assurance of a transatlantic landing.

This amicable and historic pact
  Binds Western peoples in a bond fraternal,
While not excluding the defensive act,
    Removing from the sessions
    Of the Arts and the Professions
Louis Golding, Dr. Crowther, J. D. Bernal.

The dawn of occidental brotherhood
  Is more than a strategical alliance,
But scenting intellectual turpitude,
    Political inquisitors
    Advise unwelcome visitors,
It does not cover literature and science.

America as guardian of the West,
  To guarantee the democratic pattern,
Must banish, like an agricultural pest,
    Those writers and professors,
    Potentially aggressors,
Who sabotage the safety of Manhattan.

The Pact in shining characters engraved,
  A monument of statesmanship gigantic,
The democratic way of life has saved,
    But this brotherly community
    Can only keep its unity
If Bernal stays this side of the Atlantic.

SAGITTARIUS

INCURABLE EGYPTOMANIA

WHITEHALL is suffering acutely from a particularly virulent outbreak of Egyptomania. This exotic disease affects only a small and highly selective circle. It attacks not merely in secret but almost exclusively in "top secret." It strikes primarily at Secretaries, Under-Secretaries and Assistant-Under-Secretaries of State, and Ambassadors in the Foreign Service, and at the upper reaches of the military hierarchy: it does not hit below the brigadier. Its symptoms are simple enough — an unreasoning fancy for Egypt's strategic attractions. Almost everything that has happened in North Africa and in the Middle East for two years has been tied up with this development. The Services came first—Montgomery and Tedder were great fanciers of Egypt. The Foreign Office tailed behind for a while; it is now an enthusiastic pace-maker. The Akaba incident has very little to do with events in Israel, but a great deal with those in Egypt. It marks the first move of the new fateful turn of Middle East strategy—the third change of policy since the end of the war.

This turn comes at a critical moment in history. The Atlantic Pact is about to organise a large Western sector of the Soviet perimeter. But not the vulnerable Middle East. It is therefore not surprising that prevailing military opinion considers the Middle East more exposed to Soviet penetration than any other area where the U.S.S.R. comes into direct contact with the West. But there is a strong streak of defeatism among the military. It would take months, they argue, for the Army to get going effectively, should the Russians attack through Persia and Turkey. It would be as much as they could do to cover the oilfields of Southern Persia and Saudi Arabia; there are strong doubts about holding the Mosul oil area. Even so, this limited objective would only be attainable if the Western forces had an adequate base in the Middle East. And for this purpose Egypt alone has everything that the military heart desires: she has roads, railways, ports, airports and native labour to fill any demand.

There is a difference, however, between the situation now and a year ago. Until the victory of the Israeli armies over the Arabs, the Egyptian base was little more than a military day-dream. Last autumn, it became a primary diplomatic consideration; the theory was put into practice. First came the effort to ensure a widening of the British base in the Sinai peninsula by giving Transjordan (and her ally) control over Southern Palestine. Count Bernadotte's Report, Mr. Marshall and Mr. Bevin all pressed for this at the U.N. Assembly last September. The attempt was defeated through Mr. Truman's victory, Arab rivalries and Dominion opposition. Then came the British effort at the Security Council to get a complete Jewish military withdrawal from the Negeb. That also failed. Then came the Akaba incident.

The Israelis have driven their wedge down to the Gulf of Akaba and through the British plan for the Sinai base linking the Canal Zone and Transjordan. This, at least temporary, failure of the Negeb plan has suddenly brought on another acute attack of Egyptomania. All the arguments which the Staffs, the Foreign Secretary and the Foreign Office produced with so much emphasis in the spring of 1946 during the debate on the withdrawal from Egypt, have been scrapped. All the arguments which were then denounced from the Government benches have now been re-furbished; suitably sponsored, they may appear in public at any moment. For the military planners are preparing again for the last war, and find two of their key pieces missing. During the 1942 crisis they had planned to fall back on a line from Haifa to Jericho, from there to Amman and thence across northern Iraq and through central Persia in such a way as to cover all the oilfields. Now they are thinking in the same way again. Only they are appalled by the awful gap between Haifa and Jericho now filled by Israel, about whose affections they have strong suspicions, if little evidence. And the British do not control all Egypt.

The immediate reaction has been the Akaba affair. Under cover of heartrending cries for the safety of Transjordan, the sector next to the Haifa-Jericho stretch is being reinforced very substantially—probably something like 10,000 troops may have to be moved into Transjordan before the little village of Akaba will feel safe. These ten thousand will have many and varied uses when the day comes for taking control again in Egypt.

Ministers might legitimately feel a little puzzled and sore with those who advise them on this matter. In 1946 they were made to stake everything on the soundness of evacuating Egypt and holding on to Palestine: the pay packets of the British worker depended on that, the Foreign Secretary told the House. Then, in 1947, British withdrawals from Palestine and Egypt were the military and Foreign Office solution for the Middle East. Now, in 1949, the same experts say that the only hope for saving the Middle East is that British troops should return to Egypt and get as near to Palestine as maybe. This is hardly suggestive of consistency in planning. Indeed, the calculations which have accompanied the latest versions of Middle East planning appear designed to rule out any stable settlement in harmony with local populations, and to rely for the military security of the Middle East—or at least of its oil—entirely on direct British intervention.

There are already something like 50,000 British troops of all services in the Middle East, but the "tail" is again exceptionally long. The last period of occupation in Palestine required a force of over 80,000 men. One reason why the Anglo-American Inquiry Commission's report in 1946 was rejected by the Services and the Government was because it would have required another 30,000-40,000 men (in their opinion) to enable 100,000 Jewish immigrants to be brought into the country. Now it seems lightly assumed that the conditions of the war years can be reproduced in Egypt and that there will be no great upheaval if the British return to the practice of using Egypt as main base for the Middle East.

This extraordinary record of vacillation among those responsible for defence and diplomacy in the Middle East has created an understandable atmosphere of suspicion around British intentions. No one knows what they are; one suspects that even the Ministers concerned are a little dazed by the inconstancy of their advisors. The people in the Middle East naturally fear and expect the worst. The British are coming back—or trying to. It is to-day probably the very last slogan that would rally the Middle East against anybody—except against the British themselves. Mr. Bevin and his colleagues had the right ideas in 1946. The military proposal to fall back, if need be, on Kenya was not very sound, but that would not have been necessary had the Chiefs of Staff and the Foreign Office been less obsessed by the strength of the Arab armies. They have now turned an Intelligence somersault, and are convinced of the weakness of the Arab peoples. They infer that, therefore, Britain can do what she pleases in Egypt and still be liked. It looks dangerously like incurable Egyptomania.

JON KIMCHE

THE FARMER'S FRIEND

THE farmer, we are often told, is the most independent of men. But this tradition needs some analysis. Professionally, of course, it holds good, for the industry is in the hands of nearly a third of a million producers, all accustomed to run their own show in their own way and to make up their minds, perhaps on issues affecting a year's income, "whenever the wind changes." Commercially, too, the coming of the Marketing Boards has not destroyed the ancient love of individual buying and selling, as anyone who has attended a market will know. But economically things are very different, and it is many years since the farmer has been technical master in his own industrial house. In the last century he has come to rely on others to an extent which few people realise, and today a multitude of invisible helpers serve him throughout his daily work. Unfortunately, opinion lingers behind the fact, hence many of the weird urban heresies which so disturb the countryman on his visits to town.

Now, farming, like other forms of productive activity, is in essence the application of Tools by means of Power under the guidance of Science. And from the New Stone Age to the days of Victoria the farmer designed and made his own tools, bred his own animal power which he fuelled from his crops, and inherited his science, the immemorial local lore preserved in proverb and jingle. As late as the reign of George III, for instance, the farming community was able to recreate British agriculture, changing alike crops and stock, farms and fields, men and methods, with negligible help from outside. But gradually the Industrial Age changed all that. The farmer began to buy his tools and his power ready-made and to rely increasingly on others for his science;

no longer was he self-sufficient in equipment, materials or knowledge. He continued, it is true, to do his normal job of food-production and to do it in his own way. But the means whereby he did it were increasingly provided from sources outside his farm, outside his industry, often outside his country. And they reached him through invisible helpers who of necessity could not be farmers.

This change was gradual and complicated, but it began in fairly simple fashion a century ago. First of all, the pressure of increasing farming knowledge and the ceaseless development of the means of applying it compelled the farmer to shed some of his professional load. He specialised more and more in the routine of producing crops and stock, and left other jobs, notably the provision and maintenance of capital equipment, to others. Then came the factory, which by exploiting materials and mechanical skills unknown to the village craftsman mass-produced new or improved forms of the traditional farm equipment. Hence the appearance, in Early Victorian times, of the pioneers of this new technical revolution, the farm buildings architect, the land-drainage engineer and the implement manufacturers. Their work was different in character, similar in principle; they all provided the farmer with services he had once provided for himself. But they did it better because they could accumulate professional experience and exploit industrial resources in a way which he could not. For one thing, they were specialists in types of work which the farmer undertook only occasionally; for another, they could study different methods in different parts of the country or even abroad, whereas most farmers were inevitably limited to the knowledge and traditions of their particular district. And, above all, they were in constant touch with the new materials and devices, steadily increasing in number and complexity, which urban industry was making available.

Once, for instance, the farmer drained his land by underground culverts of brushwood or stone and he erected his buildings, on the traditional local pattern, from such local materials as clay, timber or straw—and he did these things very well. But the mass-produced tile-pipes and the detailed surveys they demanded, the corrugated iron, the asphalte and the concrete of the Nineteenth Century were beyond him. So were the industrially-built metal implements which the new age was producing; and, in particular, he could only obtain the fine new power of steam through the engineer, on whom he relied for technical knowledge as well as physical equipment. And then came another change, more subtle but equally revolutionary. For the rise of commercial farming and the sale of produce to distant markets meant, in effect, the sale of fertility from the farm. This was replaced by imports of plant-food, sometimes as fertilisers, sometimes as feeding-stuffs which left manurial residues; so the farmer became a processor, turning, for instance, nitrate of soda into corn and palm-kernel cake into meat. Thus he found himself in partnership with a variety of outside interests: the overseas producer, the chemist and the merchant took their invisible place in the economy of the British farm.

But the farmer was still master of his own crops. The Victorian agriculturalist, like his Eighteenth Century predecessor, continued to experiment with seeds and cultivations, varieties and manures, while his neighbours watched him from over the hedge or studied his voluminous reports in the farming journals. The typical Home Farm of those days was, at least in part, a research station; and Tennyson's "tall, broad-shouldered Englishman Who pamphleteered on guano and on grain" was but one among many improvers. Thus, the most spectacular cropping achievement of the age, the reclamation of Exmoor, owed little to outside scientific advice, much to local experiment. And this tradition survived the coming of the great slump in the later 1870s; for, when the defeated ploughland went down to pasture it was Elliot, a farming landlord, who first propounded a definite system of farming based on grass.

But by now change was on the way. Economically, the impoverished and disheartened farming community could no longer support the burden of research; technically, the development of agricultural botany and scientific plant-breeding demanded increasingly complicated and expensive equipment, so that the field yielded to the laboratory as a source of knowledge. Hence, for instance, the Development Fund Act of 1909, which for the first time provided public funds for farming research and the consequent coming of centres and institutes. Thus did the farmer become dependent on the scientist for many of his organic tools. The work of Elliot, for instance, was continued by the Plant Breeding Stations; and while a casual alliance of landlords, farmers and outside enthusiasts had sufficed to introduce to Hanoverian England the revolutionary turnip, swede and mangold, it needed prolonged research, heavy capital outlay and Government assistance to establish the sugar-beet industry of the Twentieth Century.

So, one by one, the strongholds of technical independence fell. The pond yielded to the pump and the piped water-supply, the horse to the tractor, the human hand to the milking machine, even the ancient hoe is now threatened by the chemical weedicide. The stock-farmer, it is true, held out, for his craft demands a skill which can only be won and an attention which can only be given by the man on the spot. Nevertheless, he, too, is weakening: behind the artificial inseminator with his syringe stand the scientist and the laboratory, the administrator and the office. And the symbol of the new order is surely electricity, that strange Power which the farmer buys without knowing how, where or by whom it is made.

All this is history. By historical standards therefore, we can judge some of the unfortunate fallacies which so obscure agricultural reality. In particular, farming is in no sense a mysterious occupation apart and aloof from "normal" industry; on the contrary, it is an integral part of the general economic system on whose development its own progress depends. Consider in technical terms, for instance, the great agricultural changes of the last seventy years. It was the prairie reaper-and-binder, the railway and the steamship which wrecked the old High Farming. It was basic slag and the water-scheme, both factory products, which enabled the British farmer to exploit the natural advantages of his grassland. It was the lorry which rendered possible the modern milk industry. It is manifestly false, therefore, to regard the farmer as an independent producer who only desires to be left alone to get on with his work. Certainly, he knows his needs, no man better, but it is long since he has been able to meet them from his own resources, and in the last century he has willingly spent an ever-increasing proportion of his income on the equipment, knowledge and services brought to him by men who are not farmers. And as for the success of this partnership, look around you. Remember, we are only one life-time from the ox-team or the flail and two from the Open Fields themselves. The achievement is staggering.

The familiar legend of the "hordes of officials" who so infest our countryside is, therefore, a caricature of modern farming reality; for the greater part of these men are merely the old technicians in a new guise. The drainer, the engineer, the plant and animal scientist, the designer of farm buildings, all are there, still doing the old jobs they once did as private individuals, for they are concerned primarily not with administration but with professional answers to professional problems on the farm. It is their employer, not their function, which has changed, and there is nothing sinister in this; the causes are sometimes technical, sometimes historical, always rational. For instance, land drainage on any scale implies public powers and therefore public position, for in this type of work the few can obstruct the many and behind the modern Land Drainage Officer walk the ghosts of the forgotten communal bailiffs who enforced the cleansing of the ditches of the Open Fields. Again, the collection, analysis and distribution of those essential tools we call facts can be handled more effectively by a large organisation under central control than by scattered and independent teams. In this respect, therefore, the State has an advantage over any but the very largest firms, hence the development of the official research and advisory services. And, of course, the war carried the process further, for the Government alone had the power to see that the necessary things were done within the necessary time and therefore hired the men to do them or to see that they were done.

Further, these agriculturalists are in no sense intruders or upstarts; on the contrary, they are an integral part of any healthy farming system, the natural product of reasonable specialisation, and, as we have seen, their industrial pedigree is long and honourable. As for their increased numbers, this is merely the result of the increased demands on the industry they serve, for the last decade has seen not only phenomenal farming development but also a hurried and resolute attempt to restore the neglect of sixty years of depression, so that three men do now what one should have done twenty-five years ago. Indeed, it is a bitter commentary of the psychological results of this neglect that the professional grandchildren of the men who helped to build and maintain the great High Farming, one of the economic masterpieces of our race, should be regarded as unnecessary and obstructive when they take their rightful place in the revived British agriculture of our own day.

NIGEL HARVEY

SOAPLESS SUDS

A FASHION expert of my acquaintance told me recently that she had become a devotee of Blank's Verbena Soapless Shampoo: she would never go back to soap shampoos, or use any of the numerous competitive products. How much of her partisanship was due to pressure-advertising, auto-suggestion or confirmed experience, I am not prepared to say; but any chemist might have been able to prove to her that she could probably have taken the soapless dish-washer in her scullery and applied it to her hair with as good effect, at a fraction of the cost. Strip the high-priced fashionable detergents of the branded labels which make them proprietary: the contents, supplemented by a little colouring or scent, are in most cases standard products supplied in bulk by the big manufacturers. The popularity of soapless detergents, both in the forms marketed by luxury cosmeticians and in their plain scullery wrappers, is growing fast; and we find today the apparent commercial contradiction that the big soap-makers, like Unilever, are pushing them in open competition with the soaps or powders on advertising the virtues of which they have spent millions.

This development is due, in part, to necessity—the world shortage of fats, whose conversion into soap takes place when they are boiled with caustic soda. When our search parties went into Germany after the war, they found that the Mother of Invention had produced a large range of soapless detergents from coal—a by-product of the Fischer Tropsch "oil from coal" process. In Britain, too, the change-over to soapless suds has been stimulated by the need to get extra washing materials "off the ration." But fat scarcity is much less applicable to the United States, where some soapless detergents are actually made from fatty alchohols. Yet the Americans, without the compulsion of shortage, have taken up soapless suds in a big way. Before the war they represented only one per cent. of the preparations used for washing America's clothes; today the percentage for which they account is sixteen. Moreover, since the consumption of detergents of all types, soapless and soapy, has increased enormously in the United States since 1939, the use of soapless detergents has expanded even more remarkably than these figures indicate. The fact is that these products are very efficient for their intended purposes.

Soapless suds are not new; they have been used in industry for many years. There are hundreds of possible detergent chemicals, but the majority of them are limited in their applications. Their general purpose was, and is, to "make water wetter"—i.e., to make it possible for water, or solvents like dyes, to penetrate more easily into yarn or fabric. About fifteen years ago it was found that certain by-products of petroleum refining—the olefines—could be given detergent properties of wider application; and, just before the war, the petroleum chemists developed an improved synthetic product which had wetting, penetrating, dispersing and detergent properties. It could act in the hardest water and did not, like soap, curdle or form a deposit. It could also be used in salt water, in which hitherto only marine soap—an expensive coconut oil product—had acted efficiently. It was found that this petroleum detergent ignored both salt and the lime in hard water, and got on promptly with the job of cleaning, whereas soap must first of all "come to terms" with the minerals in the water.

The first applications of this new petroleum product were industrial—in the textile industry, where it was used as a wetting agent and grease-remover, as a means of dispersing dyes through a fabric and in anti-shrink treatment; in the leather industry, for soaking, stripping, de-greasing and dyeing; in engineering, for the "pickling" and de-greasing of metal. It was taken up by the fur trade, and had applications in rubber and paint manufacture and in the production of cellular concrete. Then came cosmetics—shampoos, vanishing cream and foam-baths. Simultaneously, the general household market, opened by the war-time scarcity of soap, was successfully entered. Today it is difficult to find a soapless detergent—shampoo, water-softener, liquid hand-washer or soapless clothes-washing powder—whose essential base does not come from the petroleum refinery. The "active principle" will be one of the "pols."

Under Ministry of Food regulations, a soapless detergent must contain seven per cent of the "active principle"; the rest may be just diluent. The better detergents usually contain up to twenty-five per cent of "pol," and may also include mineral chemicals which, as in good soaps, help the washing process in various ways. The official seven per cent gives scope for racketeering in the detergent trade, and there are a number of questionable products on the market. These apart, the difference, or range of function, distinguishing one soapless detergent from another depends on the degree of concentration of the "active principle" or on the "fillers" (phosphates, etc., used to make the powder) or on both; but there is no secret in any of them which chemists could not discover by simple analysis. Some may be best adapted for shampooing, others for stockings and silks; others may be recommended for woollens; others may be advertised for dish-washing; others, again, may claim to be most effective with carpets or for hard scrubbing. They all share the common merit that they get on with the job quickly even in hard water, and do not produce a scum or leave a deposit. Some may work more energetically than others, and some may lather more freely—always a recommendation for the housewife. And, as a substitute for soap, they do not merely economise in fats; for certain purposes they can do work which soap cannot do. Whether they will ever entirely replace soap is open to question—particularly as they are not yet available here in the familiar cake form. The soap-makers now in the soapless detergent market are presumably counting on the consumption both of soapy and soapless detergents expanding simultaneously as it has done in the United States.

RITCHIE CALDER

SO THEY SAY . . .

Mixed Grilling

Last week the press achieved the distinction of drawing the fire of no less than two Ministers of the Crown. The less impassioned attack, by Aneurin Bevan, was more or less justified. For the more vehement of the two, by Lord Pakenham, I can find no justification whatever.

Aneurin Bevan, March 16:

> I ventured to say in the course of some rather acrimonious exchanges [in the House, over Thorneycroft's Analgesia Bill] one thing which, as usual, the newspapers did not print because it was not sufficiently sensational (and I don't suppose they will print it now either) . . . that there are no statutory limitations to what the Health Service can do . . .

How many newspapers did, in fact, print the Minister's phrase "no statutory limitations"? Of the evening papers, only the *Evening Standard;* of the eight morning papers, only *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph.* And his second challenge to the press? The *Evening News* printed it—and, of course, the *Standard,* gleefully accompanying it with a reproduction of the previous day's report.

Lord Pakenham, House of Lords, March 15:

> If your Lordships read the headlines of some extremely reputable newspapers in regard to this subject [the renting and disposal of civil aircraft] you would imagine that my Ministry were engaged in a series of speculative trading transactions . . . I feel that the sub-editors can be described . . . only as sub-standard. Some of the sub-editors are perhaps the greatest enemies that the Ministry of Civil Aviation possess at the present time. If only we could . . . clip [their] wings . . . we should be doing a great service . . .

Now what were these "glaring misrepresentations in the press"? They were the headlines put to the Comptroller and Auditor-General's Report on Civil Appropriation Accounts for 1947/8, in which the following phrase occurred: "Some [Vikings] have since been sold for under one-eighth of their cost." The headlines complained of were:

The Times: LOSS ON SALE OF AIRCRAFT: VIKINGS AT ⅛TH OF COST.

Telegraph: MINISTRY PLANES SOLD AT ONE-EIGHTH COST.

Herald: £50,000 PLANES FOR £17,500.

News Chronicle: AUDITOR-GENERAL ASKS ABOUT CIVIL AIR MINISTRY'S SALE OF PLANES AT A LOSS.

Evening News: VIKINGS SOLD FOR 8TH OF COST.

Star: MINISTRY AIR DEALS QUERIED: "SOLD UNDER COST."

Evening Standard: STATE AIRLINERS SOLD AT EIGHTH OF THEIR COST.

The only headline which did not actually quote the Auditor-General was that in the *Daily Mail*: "Mystery of hidden air subsidies," and this apparently related to his comment that "grants to the airline corporations do not reflect the full cost to the Exchequer of the air services they operate." In a long statement in reply to questions, however, Lord Pakenham did not attempt to show where the sub-editors had misrepresented the situation.

* * *

Department of Helpless Surrender

March 16 must have been a confusing day for anyone travelling home in the train with only his neighbours' headlines to read:

Evening Standard: NEW HOPE FOR WAR DAMAGE CLAIMANTS.

Evening News: CABINET SAY "NO" TO WAR DAMAGE BILL.

Standard: T.A. NUMBERS "NOT TOO BAD," SAYS SHINWELL.

News: T.A. RECRUITING "NOT SATISFACTORY." —SHINWELL.

Standard: THE FACTS OF LIFE, BY A JUDGE.

News: WHAT ARE FACTS OF LIFE?—JUDGE.

Relatively Speaking

Evening Standard, March 11:

> When you sit on a hot stove for three seconds, it seems like three hours. When your girl sits on your knee for three hours it seems like three minutes. That's relativity.

News Chronicle, March 14:

> And [Einstein] keeps his sense of humour—as when he was asked to define relativity: "When you are courting a nice girl, an hour seems like a second. When you sit on a red-hot cinder a second seems like an hour. That's relativity."

AUTOLYCUS

RICEFIELD

There was no sound except the scratching of scythes against rice-stalks. It was one of those hot summer days when you can almost hear the rice growing, when the air is too heavy to breathe and the birds flutter lamely in the air, one of those oppressive, silent days when you feel that your limbs will no longer obey you, and you are blinded by the great shrill plains of green rice and the great simmering blue circle of the sky. I had left the house where I was staying because I could not breathe within the four walls of the courtyard, so humid and heavy was the air. I wandered down a country road, envying the grey-blue buffaloes in their pools, the egrets knee-deep in the lakes of the ricefields, and all the time I was thinking of the stretch of river where the boys bathe in the early morning, a clear ice-blue stretch of river where the small round pebbles can be seen shining ten feet below the surface of the water and the current is not treacherous, as it is in the upper reaches; but when I came to the river some girls were already there, giggling and screaming, their clothes piled up in complete disarray on the sandy beach, and though I would have liked to have stayed and watched them, I knew that it was not possible, and I thought: "If the buffaloes can wallow in the ricefields, there is no reason why I should not wallow, too." But even this was impossible. There were few fields under water. It was the time of reaping, and, wherever I went, there were either groups of young men or of young girls in their bright blue clothes and bronze-coloured skins working in the fields.

I was utterly exhausted. I had come to the village only the previous night, after a long journey through the hills by sedan-chair. The carriers had been thieves. The places I passed through were uninteresting. I was tired and weary, and I had not yet had a bath, for how can one bathe in the little thimbleful of water which my friend, the magistrate, offered me in the morning? He offered me everything: his books, his concubine, all the comforts of that terrible humid house, but there was a drought—he said there was a drought—the village well was not working—have the goodness to bath at Three Peachtree Temple—the temple was ruined—there was no sign of it, but it was the place where all the young people bathed, and I found it easily enough—though the naiads were there before me, and there was no comfort under that terrible Szechuanese sky, which is not really blue but indigo—I suspected it to be made of glass and provided with innumerable furnaces. So I cursed the sky, and wondered how it was that people could work in such weather, and whether indeed there was some peculiar dispensation given to the Chinese by which, like Abednigo, they can derive coolness from a raging heat, for the heat seemed to be increasing at every moment, the sweat itched under my knees and in the small of my back, and though there was shade, in the stunted rape-trees beside the road, the shade was even hotter than the open air, for their was no air under the trees.

I was angry. I had forgotten to bring a fan. (Who would bring with him a fan when he is going to bathe?) But the thing that made me most angry was the sight of other young girls in the fields in their green coats and red trousers, in their brilliant yellow straw hats into which silks had been threaded in patterns of birds and animals, working barefoot and continually singing. I was angry that people should work on such a day: they were not only not protesting against the heat, but they evidently delighted in it. I remember saying to myself: "The strange bovine quality of the Chinese—" and then suddenly I turned a corner of the long dusty road, and there were four more young girls reaping and singing by the side of the road.

It was one of those small diamond-shaped fields which are cut around crumbling tombstones. It seemed to me that the rice-stalks here were greener and wetter than anywhere else, and the girls were more handsome. They wore their hair in thick queues tied up in red threads, their trousers were rolled up above their knees, their arms were bare and the eldest was perhaps eighteen and the youngest could not have been more than seven, a little brown thing whose eyes in the heat looked like two immense bruises. As they saw me coming, furiously fanning myself with a branch from a rape-tree, they burst out laughing, but they did not stop working. And then I noticed that they were not alone: a little way away a young boy, who was naked and whose hair resembled a bird's-nest, and who was wearing silver bracelets on his ankles and an immense silver hoop round his neck was working the waterwheel of the neighbouring field, a wooden cylindrical waterwheel shaped like a long coffin, one end in the water, the other high up on the river-bank, pushing the wooden rods backwards and forwards with all his small strength. He was clearly their brother, for he had the same heavy bruised eyes, the eyes of someone who has been too long in the sun; and his cheeks were swollen and shiny with sweat.

I watched them for a while: there was something soothing in the calm flow of their muscles as they cut down the heavy bearded stalks, and besides all five of them were beautiful and graceful. It was strange to watch them toiling in this heat beneath the ruined grave-stones, on which the lettering could no longer be recognised, in their sodden blue clothes and their thick, long, oily queues. After a while they paid no attention to me. I sat down on the bank, busily waving my fan, thinking of the cool treacherous current nearby. It was midday by now, the sun directly overhead, smoke rising from the earth—even the bundles of still-wet rice were smoking. They were singing "The Green Dragon Song," but I noticed that their voices had grown softer as the sun climbed higher, and they were growing tired. And soon afterwards they laid their sickles on the bank and came to rest in the shade of the only tree in the neighbourhood, which was the tree under which I was resting.

They paid no attention to me at first. They had that singular faculty, which I have noticed only among peasants, of *sharing their shyness with strangers.* There was no need for them to speak, since they knew that they were perfectly content, but at the same time they wanted me to know that if I was shy, they too were shy; and they demonstrated this with the most extraordinary grace, looking away from me and then slowly turning towards me, saying nothing, absorbed in contemplation of this strange creature who had come to them from another world. They took off their hats. There were wild flowers in their hair. The youngest girl, the little urchin with the big blue-bruised eyes and the slender pigtails, dropped asleep: she was like a young tree, absolutely motionless. The eldest girl stretched down lazily on the grass and looked at me, steadily and unflinchingly, saying nothing at all. After a while she began to talk to the others, about the magic fan borrowed from the monkey Sun, about the naked nymphs bathing at the Flowering Fountain, and what was beautiful and strange was that she seemed to be talking to the youngest girl who was sleeping quietly in the silent embrace of the green shade. She spoke very gravely, and sometimes she would look up at me with those enormous gold eyes, in which no whites could be seen, or else she would gaze steadily at the cascades of deep green uncut rice that remained. The fields were smoking. A shimmering heat haze cut across the puffs of smoke, and all over the earth there was the profound stillness of noon.

I thought then, as I have thought many times afterwards, of the extraordinary grace and purity of this patriarchal life over which my friend the magistrate rules with benevolent despotism. All the people in this village were handsome, the fields were well-tended, the earth was succulent, the fruit trees were in bloom, immense blue grapes grew in my friend's courtyard, there was a simplicity and directness in this life which is absent from even the smallest manufacturing cities. Here, the ancient China of the Ch'ou and Han dynasties was reborn in ceremonial procession of life. I felt in this village that life was made for enjoyment, that anyone who did not enjoy the life of the seasons was culpable of the most fiendish crime, and I had long ago forgotten my annoyance because it was impossible to bathe.

The youngest of the children was awake now, her robust young body springing into life like a blossoming tree stirred by the wind.

"Do you know," said the oldest girl, "there was a time when the sun did not shine, when it was always cold?"

"Was there such a time?" I asked, for at that moment it seemed that the boiling sun would rain down on the fields for ever.

She looked at me with a curiously unforgiving look, as though all her suspicions had come true—I knew nothing about the secrets of the sun.

"But surely you know," she went on, gazing steadily at me with those great bruised eyes, "surely you know that there was a time when the sun was a virgin and unclothed, and she refused to shine until the moon, who was her brother, gave her a dress of gold needles?"

"And is the sun still a virgin?"

"No, she is married to all the stars."

That was all. A few minutes later they went back to work and I left them, but whenever I think of that small diamond-shaped ricefield under the broken gravemound, I think of the sun who is clothed in a dress of gold needles and married to all the stars, and of the four children with bruised blue eyelids working in the sun, and there is a rush of warmth in my heart for this forgotten corner of Szechuan.

ROBERT PAYNE

O, OMEGA, INVOCATION

O, thou O, opening O,
Passing from earth into a sky
Drained of last wings,
Then beyond the empyrean blue
Passing passing through light
Into space too white for seeing—

O, thou O, passing beyond
Light, into sound
Where one trumpet sustains
Concentrated symphonies
On the peak of one note,
Then passing passing beyond
To all sound silence—

O, thou O, beyond silence
Invoking gods and goddesses,
The owl-eyed, the up-finger-pointing,
Imaged flesh changing
From idea into form
Then back to bodilessness,
Continual metamorphosis
Of gods changing to godlessness—

O, thou O, returning to
Thyself, O, whose black
Hoop, circling on white
Paper, vanishes where the eye
Springs through thee, O,
Beyond space silence image,
O thou, word of beginning
Oh with what wordless end.

STEPHEN SPENDER

The Arts and Entertainment

WOZZECK

IT is nearly twenty years since I first encountered Alban Berg's *Wozzeck.* I was living at that time in Vienna; and three or four nights a week I used to make the ascent to the Fourth Gallery of the Staatsoper, to indulge my starved English appetite for opera. Berg and Schönberg were, to me, unknown territory; and I approached the formidable *Wozzeck* with no more preparation than a reading of the text (that indispensable preliminary which there is a tacit conspiracy to deny to the English opera-goer) and a general report that it was the queerest, the maddest opera ever written. It certainly sounded queer enough; in fact, to my untutored ear, quite inconsequent. The curious fact remained that I wasn't at all bored: partly because of the quality of Büchner's play, partly because of the dramatic tension of the performance (Rose Pauly was the Marie), but principally because the music, however inconsequent, illogical and atonal it might seem, was always fascinating as sheer sound and always palpably reinforced the emotional effect of the stage action. By the last act, the sense of strangeness had been superseded by that of an overwhelming tragic intensity; I couldn't imagine how this result was achieved, since there was only one passage (Marie's cradle-song) which had seemed to me to have any recognisable musical shape; and yet achieved it was, unmistakably. The students in the Fourth Gallery, following under the dim lights from their enviable vocal scores, were justified, I felt, in the shouts of enthusiasm with which they saluted the final fall of the curtain.

It was encouraging, last week, to find the Albert Hall reasonably well filled by an audience conspicuously young, and to hear again at the end that same note of vociferous approval. Evidently *Wozzeck* has lost none of its power—although of all operas in the world it is about the least suitable for concert performance. But though no less impressive to me than before (indeed, far more so), how differently the music now sounded to my ears. Revolutionary in technique, no doubt, and at a first hearing still queer and superficially tuneless, *Wozzeck* is nevertheless neither harshly aggressive, like middle period Bartók, nor remote and inhuman, like late Stravinsky, but a Klee-like web of sound, quivering with nervous sensibility, and revealing a poetic apprehension of nature and an insight, at once sardonic and pitiful, into the human heart. What strikes us now, in short, is the kinship with all German late Romantic music, from Wagner to Mahler; even, here and there, with Richard Strauss. I know that this has become a commonplace of criticism; but not until last week was I fully convinced of its truth. Wozzeck's terror at the blinding rays of the sun recalls Mime's hysteria in the same situation; and Marie falls into the Drum-major's arms to an orchestral phrase which descends directly from those associated, at similar crises, with Siegmund and Sieglinde, and with Tristan and Isolde.

Berg shares with Wagner another characteristic: ability to express intense, neurotic feeling by means of a classical elaboration and perfection of form. This aspect of the case eluded Wagner's contemporaries, whether or not they "liked" his music; just as it now eludes a *Wozzeck* audience. Indeed, the extreme formal exactitude in Wagner's scores revealed by the analyses of Alfred Lorenz is no more intended to be perceptible to the audience than are the structural devices of *Wozzeck,* which Berg himself regarded as "purely private technical aids to the achievement of cohesion." His attitude on this point is quite unequivocal:

> However much may be known about the musical forms in this opera . . . from the moment when the

> curtain goes up until it falls for the last time there should be nobody in the audience who is aware of any of these various fugues and inventions, suites and sonata movements, variations and passacaglias: nobody filled with anything but the idea of this opera, which transcends the individual fate of Wozzeck.

It was therefore a mistake of the B.B.C. to have devoted the bulk of their programme to a careful structural analysis by Mr. D. Millar Craig. What was wanted was text faced by translation (for which few people would have grudged an extra shilling or so), together with a round dozen of the principal representative and recurrent themes, which one can hardly believe that Berg meant to remain unrecognised. In their case, recognition matters aesthetically to the listener; to take the most perceptible instance, his pleasure is intensified if he is aware of the many subsequent quotations of Marie's cradle song—for instance, that pathetic one in the last page of all, where the child, too young to realise the tragedy that has left it parentless, continues its game of hobby-horse, while a frail ghost of the theme floats upwards *pianissimo*. Again, the powerful orchestral intermezzo after Wozzeck's death sums up the tragedy in a quite Wagnerian network of thematic reminiscences.

Tragedy? Many people have refused that name to *Wozzeck*, and it is true that a summary of its plot (the poor soldier, bullied, mocked and preached at by his superiors, deceived by his mistress, until a brain storm leads him to murder and suicide) suggests the merely sordid: a case-history of psychological and sociological interest; a remarkable anticipation of Freud, Marx and the "Private Zero" of expressionistic drama. That is a most inadequate impression. Certainly Wozzeck stands at the other end of the scale from the Aristotelian hero; yet he and his poor loving slut, Marie, are deeply human, universal figures. What then can it be that lifts their story out of the merely squalid into the region of tragedy? Simply this, I think: the overwhelming pity for the helpless dregs of humanity which filled both Büchner and, nearly a hundred years later, Alban Berg; an emotion similar to that which moved Shakespeare to put into Lear's mouth the unforgettable words: "Oh, I have ta'en too little thought of this." When first we hear the opera, we are perhaps most struck by the appropriately grotesque musical treatment of such grotesque characters as the Captain and the Doctor (who might both have stepped straight out of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*); but with familiarity, what moves us so profoundly is just what moved Büchner and Berg, the pitiful predicament of Wozzeck: not only as the type of oppressed under-dog, but as an embodiment of spiritual pathos, "the pathos of the uneducated man with poetic intuitions which he cannot fully express" a man whose awareness of the beauty and mystery of the world can find vent only in the form of naive superstition and fear. How moving, too, is the slightly sketched-in figure of Wozzeck's only friend Andres: Horatio to this proletarian Hamlet. The meditation and composition of *Wozzeck* occupied Berg from 1914 to 1921, and doubtless his own experiences as a soldier must have fed his sensitive, brooding imagination. For the rest, the complete technical mastery derived from his studies with Arnold Schönberg enabled him to elaborate and orchestrate his ideas in such a way that, for all their complexity and occasional jabs of violence, the texture never becomes coarse, nor the effect on the listener claustrophobic; masterly above all, and imbued with a marvellous theatrical sense, are his transitions from scene to scene. This is only one of many respects in which *Wozzeck* resembles Debussy's *Pelléas*, another work in which the comprehension of writer by composer is miraculously complete. Both operas are true masterpieces of the Romantic twilight; yet both, because of their essentially unvocal attitude to the voice, are likely to remain, from a purely operatic point of view, blind alleys.

We must be grateful to Sir Adrian Boult and the B.B.C. Chorus and Orchestra for a beautifully thorough and unusually lyrical performance. The soloists were admirably chosen, and Heinrich Nillius displayed so complete a musico-dramatic understanding of the title role that I long to see him play it on the stage. Franz Vroons was the perfect Andres, and Suzanne Danco showed herself an exceptional artist as Marie, although the timbre of her voice is rather refined for the part, and she made too little distinction between the *Sprechstimme* and the fully vocalised passages in her music—for example, in the famous scene where she reads from the Bible. The large British contingent stood well in the picture, from the Captain of Parry Jones down to such lesser parts as Gordon Clinton's splendidly magniloquent drunkard and John Kentish's Fool, with his one unforgettably tense moment. Surely scenery might have been borrowed (say, from Düsseldorf) and the rare opportunity seized to mount two or three stage performances at Covent Garden? We shall never grasp the whole greatness of *Wozzeck* until we see it in the theatre.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

THE RATTIGAN VERSION

Adventure Story, Mr. Terence Rattigan's chronicle play about Alexander the Great at the St. James's, must, alas, be judged as one of this writer's rare mistakes. In his last two plays he seemed to be making a steady advance. *The Winslow Boy*, apart from its intrinsic merits, showed a special kind of brilliance in the choice of subject (many excellent writers fail just here). And in *The Browning Version* he moved beyond that facile characterisation which is a mark of the merely popular writer, towards a real exploration of character. Now he has taken a wild leap which has landed him between stools. His new play is not mature enough to satisfy those who have already responded emotionally to the figure of Alexander; nor, unless I am greatly mistaken, is it sufficiently crude to appeal to that large public who enjoy seeing history reduced to a sort of contemporary slip-slop.

On the face of it Alexander might be an excellent subject. He might be taken at the point of disillusion, after the return from India, where the whole venture could be imagined to be going sour on the conqueror; where the triumphant sweep and the unhampered use of his dazzling powers is succeeded by the far less spectacular and rewarding business of government, with its accompanying intrigues and treacheries; instead of the straightforward life of a camp soldier with its clan-like companionship where he ruled *primus inter pares*, the corruption of luxury and the necessary despotism.

If only Mr. Rattigan had concentrated the interest there: instead of dispersing it as he has done here, over the whole sweep of the conquest! For how on earth on a static stage can he hope to represent these vast wild distances, these incredible far-flung conquests? He can't. Divine language might conceivably have done it. But Mr. Rattigan was not born in the age which invented a language for the heroic, and he wisely doesn't try that. No, he turns to an invention which is peculiar to his own times.

We have often been given the film of a play before now, but this must be the first occasion when we have been given the play of a film, even before the film has been made. Everything here is "filmy," from the grandiose decor and the canned music to the flash-back device of the prologue and epilogue (Alexander on his death bed with the Companions filing past, and his thoughts—"where did it begin to go wrong"—moaning over loud-speakers). There is even a

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Company Meeting

BRITISH TYRE AND RUBBER

RECORD BUSINESS

THE twenty-fifth annual general meeting of the British Tyre and Rubber Company, Limited, was held on March 16 in London.

Sir Walrond Sinclair, K.B.E. (the chairman) said that a year ago he had pointed out that the company had shown progressive results for many years and added that the returns then available were satisfactory. As a matter of fact the volume of business had continued to expand and by the close of the financial year had reached the highest level in the history of the company. As a result, the trading profit of the group showed an advance of £280,375 to £1,648,825, the latter figure well exceeding the issued capital.

He felt the period before them was going to be difficult. They would certainly be forced to face up to realities by hard work, greater production at lower cost, the elimination of every kind of unproductive effort, more output per man-hour and the clearance of all needless controls and restrictive practices. Above everything the need for lessened Government expenditure was paramount. Only in that way could the burden of taxation on the country be lightened and the necessary incentive to encourage everyone to give of their best be brought into effect.

He was inclined to be less hopeful with regard to the immediate future, on the long view, however, he was still confident, but he had considerable doubt whether they could expect a continuation of the progress achieved during 1948. Fortunately when one looked at the balance sheet one could take some comfort that whatever the difficult weather ahead they were financially well equipped to ride the storm.

The report was adopted.

drop-curtain painted with a coloured map on which, before each scene, our progress is spotlighted from Delphi to Issus, to Babylon, to Bactria, to Alexandria-at-the-end-of-the-world. But none of it works for giving us a sense either of distance or of strangeness. We never seem really to move. Indeed, having chosen this chronicle subject, only by some over-riding idea or viewpoint could he have given any sense of direction or growth to his isolated series of scenes. In default of this he has fallen back on a popular device. At each of the ten various points in time and space we are given some little incident from the life dramatised up. It is like the formula for making a well-known breakfast cereal as it is described on the package. Each little grain of fact or legend is popped into the oven, where it is exploded by the Rattigan process and comes out puffed up to five times its ordinary size, soft instead of hard and hollow at the centre. This, of course, makes for easy eating.

So at Delphi, Alexander climbs over the wall of the temple to exact an answer from the Oracle, and is held off by a priestess who resembles the self-important secretary of a V.I.P. keeping a press-reporter at bay—until his charm melts her and they become familiar:

> "You see, Pythia, my father didn't believe in me . . ."
>
> "I am sorry for you, Alexander . . ."

At Babylon there is shot of Darius *en famille*, the women sewing on the floor and offering strategical advice, Darius on the throne reading disquieting dispatches from the front ("This boy begins to interest me . . ."). At Issus the Persian royal tent is overrun with the royal womenfolk inside it, and he behaves magnanimously to the Queen Mother and diffidently tries out the Persian throne. In Parthia Darius dies on the traditional farm cart, and Alexander throws his cloak over the body ("It wasn't you I was fighting, Darius. Please remember that"). And so on and so on till the foothills of India where, just before the expedition, he wins back the love of the Queen Mother of Persia. ("Another conquest for Alexander" . . . she doesn't fail to say.)

I cannot guarantee the exact verbal accuracy of my quotations (except for the last), but they are faithful to the spirit, and will indicate how the problem of language has been shirked. If a colloquial idiom is to be used, then it must be *used*—used for the effect it can give in subordination to whatever general design there may be: in some such way, for instance, as Cocteau or Anowith use it. It cannot, except in the worst kind of film, be left to take its poor shabby little chance among the antique trappings and the world-shaking events. This only makes for banality, and sometimes even for bathos.

Hardly less courageously faced than the language problem is the problem of Alexander himself. We are offered nothing approaching a coherent view of the man. The most we are given is three sketchy suggestions of what drove him to conquer the world. First, the mere adventurousness which the title indicates, and which is picked up again in the epilogue (Alexander is still dying: the Companions still tramping past and the thoughts coming over the loud-speaker. "I've enjoyed the adventure. . . . Now it is over and the Adventurer wants to sleep"). The second motive suggested is a kind of militant pacifism. One world. An end of national sovereignty. No more war. This is offered us three-quarters of the way through—but apologetically ("I hope I'm not talking too much, like my old tutor, Aristotle"). The third suggestion is psychological—the attempt to out-do his father.

But no one of these is really explored, imagined, felt, and indeed it would have needed all the time at his disposal and a great deal more subtlety, force, conviction and concentration to have imposed any one of them on us. It couldn't be done by picking up any second-hand clichés that happen to be lying around in the popular mind. This is all Mr. Rattigan gives himself time to do. And his Alexander turns up as a weak, petulant, self-pitying adolescent such as might be imaginable in a play where he is at long last seduced by the House-master's wife; but is quite unacceptable as the conqueror of the whole of the then known world.

I do not think Mr. Rattigan is helped as much as he could have been by his Alexander. Mr. Paul Scofield is a young actor graced with the most enviable array of gifts. An excellent presence, fine looks, a musical voice and that indefinable magnetism which can by itself take an audience. But these endowments are only the foundation. Whether he uses them to become an actor, or whether he will be content to drift into becoming a gallery-idol or a film star is yet to be seen. The best performance comes from Robert Felmynge as the most stout-hearted of the Companions. Mr. Nicholas Hannen, Mr. Noel Willman, Mr. Cecil Trouncer, Mr. William Devlin and Miss Ffrangçon-Davies are all accomplished enough actors to fill in a rough sketch.

T. C. WORSLEY

FRANCES HODGKINS

THE present exhibition at the St. George's Gallery is entitled "Homage to Frances Hodgkins." Certainly the best woman painter ever to have worked in this country (she was born in New Zealand), she deserves to be honoured. But the writer of the note in the catalogue goes rather too far in claiming that her work "equals in quality that of her great contemporaries in France." Undoubtedly Frances Hodgkins was in certain respects an inspired artist: she had the power to create images which were remarkably original, whether regarded in themselves or as equivalents for natural objects. A farmyard implement or machine, no less than a jug, would be translated into an unforgettable image: the true creative process by which the subjects of painting are re-created, rather than reported, was always present in her work. She could not copy. A further distinction, and it is rare, was her ability to extend this creative insight to landscape: many modern artists suffer a restriction of vision that is apparently typical of our time—their insight fails with the broad open-air scene.

The few landscapists among the moderns tend, even so, to evoke their hills and valleys by way of still life. Sutherland has always expelled the natural atmosphere; there is no trace in his landscapes of the blues which alone suggest air, distance, and the scale of the outdoor scene. Sutherland's hills might be models of hills, preserved in a vacuum, the air pumped out; equally, they might be the size of a whole continent—a continent seen from an altitude of 10,000 miles. Size, actual scale, do not matter: his hills are microcosmic or macrocosmic, according to your feeling of the moment: they work as analogies of form whether you read them as referring to Everest or an ash-heap. In this resides their chief fascination. Frances Hodgkins, however, was interested every time in the actual instance: the specific subject. Her farmhouse or her row of tall, tapering elms are not generalisations, such as Sutherland makes: she is concerned with one scene, the place she is in. No matter how abstract her rendering becomes, she is still communicating a formal fantasy based on this view of this farm; or of that table by that window in that room. In other words, abstraction in her painting, so far from being an end in itself, comes into existence simply as a vehicle: it is always at the service of a specific object. And this is, of course, precisely as it should be. A painter who begins by admiring—not this or that thing, place or person—but the essence of abstraction itself, is likely

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to end in an arid desert of de-spiritualised forms. The constructivists are an example. The visual music of purely formal relationships may well be the profoundest experience which painting can offer. Nevertheless, what is abstract and formal in painting cannot be self-supporting. We must continually forge our abstractions anew—and the material to be used is the natural imagery of the visual world, on one hand, and the imagery of the greatest painters (of any age) on the other. These two, fused, ignite the creative spark: this way new forms arise.

Frances Hodgkins cannot be classed with "her great contemporaries in France" because of her inability to absorb enough from the second of these two sources of inspiration. Her originality when confronted by nature was not matched by a sufficiently profound understanding of pictorial science. Where Braque, Picasso or Matisse, incredible though they are for the diversity of their work, still speak the language of the central tradition, Frances Hodgkins is a naive outsider to that tradition. Though she possessed a visual imagination so intense as to amount to genius, she was incapable of expanding her vivid clusters of imagery into a coherent, pictorial whole. Her sense of the whole, of the unity of construction, tended to be restricted to what was often little more than a consistent texture; a net of pleasant, misty colour thrown over the whole surface to unify it. Such connection as this device affords is not a proper equivalent for a set of more structural relations. This is why we feel that the cottage with a tree at its corner, the farm cart with a milk churn which stands by a broken gate, the tin shed with a farm machine of some sort leaning against it, are all *floating*. All her images of solid objects are self-contained; they are like birds' nests floating on a stream: the surface of the water is a neutral, passive background to these little islands of interest.

Two paintings in the exhibition come most clearly before my mind's eye as I write: *Harbour Ibiza* (25) and *Private Bathing* (27). The first is untypical of her in that the criticisms I have been making apply to it less than to anything else in this show. The house-shapes of the little port, the elegantly chiselled harbour-wall, the taut curves of the receding coast beyond, leading us to the feet of some superbly corrugated, sharp, white-and-blue mountains—all are unusually definite in form. Then the hard clarity of their rendering is equally surprising for this artist. But the main quality which distinguishes this little picture from all its neighbours is the consistent coherence of its structure. The eye begins with the near brown slopes and is led at once into the complicated yet clear forms of the houses and harbour; thence it proceeds easily over the bay to the distant curving beaches and the mountains. Each different set of forms in this sequence is perfectly confluent with the next: there is none of her usual hopping from image to image. Each object is welded to the next, and grows out of it. In the other picture, *Private Bathing*, there is an equally coherent spatial design, though at first glance it is actually one of the worst offenders from the "decorative surface" point of view. Its surface *is* decorative: but the flowering of its charming touches—scrawls and smudges—across the canvas is accompanied by an unfolding spatial theme.

PATRICK HERON

THE MOVIES

"The Queen of Spades," at Warner's
"The Bad Lord Byron," at the Leicester Square
"The Accused," at the Plaza

The British film industry isn't, despite head-shakings, quite dead. At Warner's this week it delights with a modestly apt version of Pushkin's *The Queen of Spades*—the last thing one would have expected! That masterpiece has always seemed to me within reach of the cinema, as most literary masterpieces are not; and from time to time I had hoped that it might attract, say, the director of *Lermontov*, or some French Russophil—why not M. Georges Lampin, whose talented handling of *The Idiot* we have enjoyed lately? Either of them could have turned a piece nearer to Pushkin's times and level. However, it was not to be. Here, English pack and deal, is *The Queen of Spades*, and complaint or disappointment is the last thing I should wish to express.

For, though it may not be altogether up our street, this Byronic episode that refines on Byronism and gives it the knife-thrust, it *is* superb material for the screen, and all credit to those who have grasped the fact. How the romantic sinister theme thrills! How pat comes the anecdote—a German captain of engineers in St. Petersburg who night after night watches while his fellow-officers gamble, hears of the old countess diabolically possessed of the "secret of the cards," sets out to woo the niece, frightens to death the old woman, learns the formula from her ghost, and then in his moment of fortune, tricked by Fate or Guilt, plays the wrong card—the pasteboard woman! From beginning to end, through gaming rooms, snowy vigils, love letters, boudoir visits, nights at the opera, and house-breaking into the mysterious past, it flows and grows, swept on the rapid impulse of Pushkin's narrative. The adapters, departing from their original, have thrown in a number of diabolic hintings of their own; films have their own romantic tradition, and this story can carry them. On the whole, Mr. Thorold Dickinson, the director, together with his script-writers and sets-designer, has made an elegant job of it. They have caught on, and the film goes, that's the main thing. Miss Edith Evans gives a magnificently mannered performance as the fussy, terrible old woman, and if Mr. Anton Walbrook's middle-aged impassivity does not quite picture for us the damned youth dreaming of fortunes, it does not fatally obstruct. *The Queen of Spades* ought, by the way, to achieve a considerable success with English audiences. We gamble and condemn gambling more than any other race, and Pushkin offers us both the perfect system and its ineluctable sequel.

Another English film, *The Bad Lord Byron*, goes to the fountain-head and makes a mess of it. While Mr. Dennis Price (who bears little resemblance to Byron) lies at Missolonghi dying lackadaisically as he has lived, we are treated to a celestial courtroom, in which the women in his life show off like mannequins. The judge talks like the harassed leader-writer of a popular Sunday newspaper. Was he, the court is asked more than once, a great cad or a great poet? On the evidence submitted here, a great bore. Some Byronic tit-bits—the "treacle-moon," for example—filter through a haze of dullness, and Venice looks prettier than Greece.

The Accused is a thriller, with Miss Loretta Young as an associate professor of psychology, who commits murder. Her name is Dr. Wilma Tuttle: you will recognise by that what kind of film it is. She looks every inch a Tuttle, until, by a process well known to amateurs of the screen, falling in love, she instantly grows beautiful. The expertise is no less winning. Having murdered the student who makes passes at her in his essays, she comforts herself with the thought: "I know what a guilt-complex is—it shan't get hold of me." And we steal upon her in the laboratory, discovering with live rats the proposition that "man is more complex than a rat."

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Correspondence

FILM FINANCE

SIR,—It seems to be conceded that entertainments tax is not part of a film's receipts and that 7d. is divided as to 4d. to exhibitors and 3d. to producers. Mr. Launder, rather covetously perhaps, seems more interested in exhibitors' receipts, but a Committee over which Lord Portal presides is examining that aspect and is much more competent to report.

Exhibitors probably spend 3¼d. to attract 4d., whereas producers may spend 5d. to recover 3d. The present slump in production is a logical answer. A British producer informed me that he estimated the annual loss on British film production to be approximately £4,000,000. If this is correct it is no use suggesting that raiding exhibitors' ice-cream sales would be any solution. Obviously large economies have still to be achieved in production in those highly paid quarters where real economy can be effected. I have every sympathy with the lower-paid craftsmen who are always the first victims of an economy wave.

While the production slump runs its course, where are the already redundant employees to find employment? Have we heard the last of dismissals? The question can again be asked where else can employment be provided except by the resumption by American film companies of British film production. They have experience, money and world-wide distribution available. I commend to Mr. Michael Clarke the enlightened support which Mr. T. O'Brien, M.P., the General Secretary of the National Association of Theatrical and Kine Employees, has expressed on behalf of his "redundant" members for the policy of Anglo-American co-operation. If this be successful, a dozen or so first-class British films should result within the next twelve months.

Otherwise if the annual loss on British production is about £4,000,00, raiding exhibitors' slender profits is not a permanent solution, except that it would put everyone out of business. I do not minimise the great value of the Film Finance Corporation, which is ready to make loans.

Anglo-American co-operation should provide for all a fair share of the receipts which British films earn from the public, whereas, under present conditions of antagonism, everything detrimental to British production seems to be happening, and during the currency of a 45 per cent. quota!

W. R. FULLER,
General Secretary
Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association.

ARTIST, CRITIC AND PUBLIC

SIR,—The critic, I think, must accept more of the responsibility for the decline of art than Mr. Mortimer appears willing to attribute to him in his excellent article on the artist, critic and public. For while he successfully diagnoses the causes for the artist's decline, he seems to be too lenient with the critic, whose sympathy with the artist's disillusion seems to make him uncritical. In fact, the tendency of the critic to ignore the larger issues and concentrate on judging painting in terms of painting has, if anything, widened the gap between the artist and the public, when, in reality, the critic should be fighting to close it.

The critic has a function rather more than simply to express his personal reaction to a work of art, and a large part of it, I would suggest, is to help create the relationship between the artist and the public which is so essential. A work of art, it must be remembered, is never complete in itself. It is a result of a direct participation, a direct relationship, between the creator and the audience. The artist's disgust with the world about him, as Mr. Mortimer says, leads the artist to attempt the impossible—to become entirely self-sufficient: which results, inevitably, in decay.

Only, I suspect, when the artist and his audience have some common ground will a vital relationship exist. When the artist can make an appeal to the people—not simply the narrow clique of the self-styled cognoscenti—he will regain his status—not by degrading his aims, but by finding some common standards, some common values with the people for whom he wishes to create. Whether that will happen through a revival of religion, or through the discovery of some more vital set of principles for the advance of mankind, I do not know.

Mr. Mortimer's attempt to dismiss Communism as a possible source of this relationship defeats itself: surely it is better for the artist, at first, to appeal to the "untrained eye of the *populace*" (not the bureaucrat) in order to awaken appreciation, than to ignore the untrained eye of the populace and so have the gap which Mr. Mortimer laments? And the painting which has come from Jugoslavia and other new Communist States does hint that perhaps the vitality of a Socialist society will produce that relationship on which both the health of art and of the people depends.

Only, I think, when the critic appreciates this will we go some way towards closing the gap.

GERALD LEWIS

10a Sudbrooke Road,
London, S.W.12.

DEAD MEN'S MONEY

SIR,—Viscount Samuel's motion calling attention to the importance of encouraging voluntary action for social welfare and Mr. Rolph's article in your issue of February 19th, at the conclusion of which he suggests the appointment of a Royal Commission on Dormant Funds, are of special interest to the Council for the Preservation of Rural England and its County Branches and Constituent and Affiliated Bodies.

The threats and depredations which called the C.P.R.E. into being after the First World War are again present in an aggravated form. The country's financial difficulties have necessitated the fullest possible use of all our material resources and the demands upon our commons and open spaces, and upon agricultural land in particular, for New Town development, housing, airfields, Services' training areas, camps and mineral workings (especially by opencast methods) are everywhere the subject of anxiety and apprehension. The situation is brightened only by the fact that town and country planning is now far more of a reality than it was 25 years ago; but the Ministry of Town and Country Planning itself, and the other Government Departments with which the C.P.R.E., like the W.E.A., is brought into increasingly close contact, readily admit that the need for voluntary action in this sphere still persists and that there is a dangerous fallacy in the conception of the State as the all-wise Universal Caretaker and Provider.

The C.P.R.E., like many other worthy organisations, is financed entirely by voluntary contributions. We receive no Government grant and we seek none, for our effectiveness depends on our independence, which we think it important to preserve. Yet at this time of compelling urgency the sources of our income become more and more restricted owing to high taxation and to the operation of those very economic factors which increase the need for our vigilance and the demands we have to meet.

We are, therefore, very glad to give our support to the New Education Fellowship, the Workers' Educational Association and the "Save the Children" Fund in their plea for effective steps to be taken to free dormant moneys in the hands of obsolete charities for beneficial use in the national interest.

Council for the Preservation of Rural England.

H. G. GRIFFIN,
Secretary

RITUAL MUTILATIONS

SIR,—Readers interested in Critic's comment on female circumcision may like to know that the whole question has been reviewed in a paper on "Sexual

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Mutilations" in the November, 1948, and February, 1949, copies of the International Journal of Sexology (Biotechnic Press, London).

It would appear that sexual mutilations go back to neolithic, if not paleolithic, times and seem to have started with the beginning of the human race in central Africa. The custom spread outwards and persists as a ritual. The Jews, for example, learned circumcision from the Egyptians. The Australian aborigines developed a somewhat similar system of multilation, apparently independently, but this is dying out because the aborigines are disappearing also.

Although ritual mutilations are interesting psychopathologically they are a source of endless misery and will disappear, as you state, only with the spread of education. CLIFFORD ALLEN

148 Harley Street,
London, W.1.

BULGARIAN EVANGELICALS

SIR,—In his letter in your issue of March 12, Mr. Padev admits that there was full religious freedom in Bulgaria until the middle of 1948. I welcome this admission, since Mr. Padev cannot be "accused" of having any sympathies with the present Bulgarian Government. The issue is thus narrowed down to the question whether there has been any "religious persecution" in Bulgaria during the past nine months.

In that period, I challenge Mr. Padev to give a single example of churches in Bulgaria being closed down; of any church newspapers, magazines, books or publications being suppressed; of any religious body or group of believers or individuals being denied freedom to profess their faith and practise their religion; of any priests or pastors being denied the same rights as belong to all other citizens.

If there is a campaign against religion in Bulgaria, why should the State, in 1948, pay the Orthodox Church 370 million levas (89 per cent. of the Church's annual budget) for its maintenance? Why should it allocate 11 million levas for the support of the Moslem Muftis? Why should the Communists tie their hands with such legal obstacles to religious persecution as the Constitution and the Law on Creeds, both of which declare provocation of religious hatred and interference with religious freedom to be punishable by law?

Mr. Padev endeavours to support his allegation that there is a "persecuted" Protestant minority by suggesting that the former Bulgarian Exarch Stephan was an enemy of the Fatherland Front, and that he was "dismissed from his post" by the Government. It might be charitable, though it is difficult, to suppose that he is ignorant of the real facts, which are that the Exarch was not "dismissed" by the Government, but was relieved of his office by the Holy Synod for reasons (largely of health) which had nothing to do with opposition to the regime. The former Exarch, I might add, is now in enjoyment of a generous pension and is recuperating at the Karlovo Spa, where he has been given a villa.

BORIS TEMKOV.

Legation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria,
S.W.7.

FAMILY HISTORY

SIR,—Since Lord Vansittart has been "investigating" people's racial antecedents the game is gaining fast in popularity. If you happen to be unable to formulate a political answer to a political challenge, you can always point out that your adversary is a Jew; with luck, he may even be a Russian. I, for one, following a letter from me that was published in your journal, am alleged to be both by an anonymous correspondent in *East Europe*. Among other things, this correspondent states: "This lady is a Russian . . . her parents, both of them Jewish, fled to Hungary from Russian pogroms in 1906."

Now, I happen to be a Socialist and to hold strong views on racialism. First, I do not know what race is; secondly, whatever it is, it is immaterial. But in order to reveal the depths of scurrilous personal attacks to which this kind of smearing criticism now descends, I should like to put on record that my father's name was Alfred Ritter von Duczynski. His forbears were Polish noblemen who fought in the Polish rising of 1832, and after defeat fled to Austria where they settled and had their titles conferred on them again by the Emperor. My mother was a Magyar. Her surname was békási Békássy. Her family can be traced back to the time of the Magyar Conquest under Arpad in the Tenth Century. Its story is the usual story of the Magyar land-owning nobility, a story of fraud, violence, and oppression of the peasantry, tempered by ineptitude—until the reckoning came in 1945.

I am afraid the best I can do in the way of a Jewish ancestor is a paternal great-grandfather, a Hungarian Jew named Wellesz. He was an arms manufacturer and to the best of my knowledge a patriot, who supplied Louis Kossuth with arms and went bankrupt in 1849. ILONA POLANYI

S.W.10.

FULL-TIME SPECIALISTS

SIR,—The medical profession still seeks to establish itself in a position of privilege. If the proposals for the payment of specialists (discussed by "Medicus") go through, it will no longer pay any hospital doctor to remain in full-time employment if he regards his position purely from the financial angle. Long study of the hospital service, and of the present supply of specialists in most subjects, convinces me that, if the Minister of Health made the decision to employ only full-time consultants, he would give the people a far better service than by any possible combination of part-timers.

Two points should be added to your article. The Spens Report on which specialists' incomes are to be based was itself based on a set of faked figures—faked in the sense that they consisted only of the incomes of part-time consultants and ignored the many thousands of whole-time hospital officers. In every region in the country whole-time specialists supply the bulk of the time given to hospital patients. Had their pre-war salaries been taken into account, Spens must have recommended incomes at least £500 a year lower than he did.

Secondly, your correspondent hints at the craziness of the extra payments for some specialists that Spens suggests. It must be realised that a surgeon who gets a £2,500 award may get £4,700 from the State for nine half-days work, plus his expenses for travelling to his work and any figure he can reach for black-market medicine in the other five half days. The State will pay its share of his superannuation and he will retire on a pension that will be staggering in comparison with the pay a miner gets for a hard day's work. We need two decisions from the Minister if the hospital service is to succeed—as many full-time specialists (available for domiciliary visits as well as hospital work) as can be found; and the reference of all medical salaries to the Whitley Council, as has been done for pharmacists, technicians and all other health workers.

176 Kew Road, D. STARK MURRAY
Richmond, Surrey.

JUSTICE OR REVENGE?

SIR,—Major-General Fuller states that the article under his name in the *Hamburger Allgemeine Zeitung* was not written for that paper, but was condensed from a longer article he contributed to an American publication. This may be so, but the fact is irrelevant to my point, which is that the article as printed in the Hamburg paper was mischievous, because it was both anti-British and anti-Semitic. The matter was raised in the House of Commons on March 16, when, in reply to a question, Mr. Hector McNeil, Minister of State, said that the British element of the Control Commission had taken steps to stop the circulation of articles like it.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Like Thomas Masaryk, Chaim Weizmann both prophesied from exile the return of his people to nationhood, and presided over the fulfilment of his dreams. *Trial and Error is not only the autobiography of the greatest practical Zionist, but the first account of Zionism which elucidates it in terms intelligible to the Gentile mind. Here we read not the Teutonic generalities of Herzl, the father of Zionism, who never really understood the child he had almost by chance begotten, but the life history of the Jewish chemist from Minsk who, in the intervals of his scientific researches, converted the politicians and officials in London to his fantastic vision, and then proceeded to make good in Palestine what he had foretold in Manchester.**

The first volume, which ends with the Balfour Declaration, is a story of miraculous achievement. It is told with a narrative skill and, on occasion, a rich, chuckling humour which makes it intensely readable In Volume Two, the stream, which appeared to be broadening out on a rich and placid plain of Anglo-Jewish concord, runs into rapids and almost disappears among the rocks. In describing the British reversal of policy which broke his own career and nearly broke his people, Dr. Weizmann displays a characteristic self-restraint. The narrative falters. Obviously, much has been omitted, too much, indeed, by historical standards. There is bafflement, regret, reasoned reproach, but not a word of shrill bitterness.

Two things indeed stand out in the life of this Russian Jew—his love of science and his love of England. They transformed his Zionism from a narrow political mystique into an intensely practical and humanist philosophy. Despite the depth of his Jewish nationalism, Weizmann remains an individualist, with a lively relish for the good things of life and a contempt for austerity, pedantry and straight-laced superstition. He hates highfalutin humbug, and suspects any theory which is treated as more than a hypothesis. If there is one class of person which he suffers worse than fools, it is theorists; and Zionism has had more than its share of them. "You can only get out of things what you put into them," is one of his precepts; and another runs, "Written declarations have virtually no importance unless and until they are supported by actual performance." He broke Herzl's brand of snob Zionism, with its grandiose schemes for getting the Great Powers to do all the work, as ruthlessly as he opposed Jabotinsky who seemed to believe that Jewry could simply disregard the interests of the Great Powers. In both cases he scented a tendency to prefer abstractions to the plain job of getting Jews settled in Palestine. So, too, he accepted partition in 1936, and opposed the terrorists and revisionists ten years later, because he believed that what mattered was to establish a nation, however small, in Palestine, even if this means accepting for the time being "intolerable" political conditions. His opponents have repeatedly accused him of appeasement, to which his reply is "*Circumspice.* Without my patient, plodding, practical Zionism, how many Jews would there have been to fight the six Arab armies on May 15th? If I had not loved Britain and won the confidence of her leaders, none of my critics would have been here to condemn my pro-British bias."

Born in the Pale, the only part of Russia where Jews were then permitted to live, and growing up in the period of black reaction which culminated in the Kishinev pogrom, Weizmann soon came into conflict with his two chief enemies, the assimilated Western Jew—of which the extreme expression was the rich, complacent German, *plus royaliste que le roi*—and the Marxist, who envisaged emancipation in terms of international Communism, and dismissed Zionism as a bourgeois aberration. The early chapters of *Trial and Error* will be of absorbing interest even to those who care nothing about Zionism, Palestine, or scientific research. They paint an unforgettable picture of Jewish family life, under conditions of racial discrimination which made it quite impossible for any Jew to feel himself a Russian. Czarist antisemitism, indeed, sustained Jewish nationalism just at the time when, further West, liberal reform was creating conditions for assimilation. Herzl, a member of the Austrian upper classes, was an intellectual Zionist. Enjoying all the rights and liberties of the West, he came as a philanthropist to the assistance of his unfortunate Eastern brethren. Weizmann's Zionism sprang out of his whole boyhood, first at the remote village of Motol, then at school, and, finally, as a member of that uprooted and impoverished student community in the universities of Berlin and Berne. He belongs to those millions of Eastern Jews who really were a people without nationhood, and who looked to the great democracies of the West for hope of deliverance from their exile. That is why he has nothing of that philanthropic condescension about him which is so common among British and American Jews—"*we* pay to make *them* Zionists." Even after forty-two years in Britain, which brought him economic affluence and social recognition, he has retained unblemished the Yiddish humour and vitality of the Pale. He identifies himself with the poor masses, and feels all their bitter resentment against the rich renegade who sells his birthright for a spurious assimilation with the Christian world around. Nothing is more striking than the contrast between the patient understanding which he displays for the backslidings of Gentile statesmanship and his intolerance of those rich and influential Jews who see Zionism as a threat to their status. He sorrows over Mr. Bevin; but he castigates with scorpions poor Mr. Montagu, who in 1916 raised objections to the Balfour Declaration on behalf of British Jewry.

For British readers, the chapters on life in Manchester will probably be the most interesting in the whole book. A young Russian chemist with a Berlin degree arrives in Manchester University one Bank Holiday and tries to set up his lab. He has no contacts, even with British Jewry, since he has alienated them by his successful opposition to the Uganda project. He has no money, and no knowledge of English. But within six months he is teaching the Lancashire students chemistry, and very soon his wife, having taken her medical degree for the third time in a foreign language, is in charge of the city's clinics. Rutherford, Alexander and C. P. Scott are his closest friends and, in the middle of the 1906 election campaign, he has had one conversation with Mr. Balfour. Out of these personal friendships in a provincial English town, with their strange inter-weaving of science and politics, grew that fabric of Zionist policy which was to set the pattern of British Middle Eastern diplomacy for the first 20 years after the war.

In the formulation of that policy, Weizmann's personality was decisive. When war broke out, European Zionism was not only divided by national frontiers, but hostile to Britain, owing to our alliance with Russia. A German victory was expected and desired by Jews who knew only too well of the pogroms which were occurring behind the advancing Russian armies. Weizmann predicted a Russian collapse, and worked for the victory of Britain. He severed all contacts with his colleagues on the Continent, and quarrelled even with American Jewry, which was still sitting on the fence. Having established his *bona fides* in this way, he convinced both the Cabinet and the Foreign Office that an identity of interest existed between the British Commonwealth and Zionism.

In re-telling this story Dr. Weizmann disposes of two legends. The first runs that Lloyd George gave him the National Home as a return for his war service as a chemist. According to the second, the Balfour Declaration was mainly motivated by considerations of political warfare. The real reason why men so diverse as Balfour, Lloyd George, Cecil, Milner and Sir Mark Sykes (Chief Secretary of the War Cabinet and co-author of the Sykes-Picot Agreement) were converted was that they genuinely believed the Jews deserved a National Home - being Christians who read their Bibles, thought that this Home should be in Palestine. Moreover, they all believed that a Jewish Palestine would safeguard British interests north of the Suez Canal. Serious difficulties with the Arabs were not foreseen even by Colonel Lawrence, who in 1922 stated that justice had been done to their claims in the Churchill White Paper. Only Lloyd George remarked, with curious prescience, on the day that the Mandate was assigned to Britain at San Remo:

> You have no time to waste, Dr. Weizmann. Today the world is like the Baltic before a frost. For the moment it is still in motion. But if it gets set, you will have to batter your heads against the ice blocks and wait for a second thaw.

But even Lloyd George could not foresee that the chief ice-block would be Britain. *Trial and Error* describes in great detail how, already in the first days of the military occupation of Palestine under Allenby, most of the lower British officials began to show that pro-Arab bias which is so often a disguised form of antisemitism. Gradually the great freeze spread from Jerusalem to Westminster, until the White Paper was framed, as an integral part of Chamberlain's appeasement policy. Weizmann recalls a strange appeal made to him at this time by Lord Halifax:

> There are moments in the lives of men and of groups when expediency takes precedence over principle. . . . Of course I don't know whether you can or will accept my advice, but it would be desirable that you make an announcement of the great principles of the Zionist movement to which you adhere, and at the same time renounce your rights under the Mandate.

Weizmann's "No" in 1939, though he did not realise it at the time, marked the end of his active leadership both of world Zionism and of Palestine Jewry. He hoped, of course, that appeasement would end with the fall of Chamberlain, and in 1944 at Chequers, Mr. Churchill declared himself in favour of partition and the inclusion of the Negev in the Jewish State. Two days later Lord Moyne was murdered by the Stern Gang, and Mr. Churchill pushed aside the Palestine problem for the duration. Once again, in 1945, the victory of the Labour Party seemed to promise a renewal of Anglo-Jewish collaboration, but disillusionment came quickly:

> I first went to see Mr. Bevin, in his capacity as Foreign Secretary, with regard to certificates for refugees. We had been offered a ludicrously small number—a remnant, it was stated, unused under the White Paper. We refused the certificates. Mr. Bevin's opening remarks to me were: "What do you mean by refusing certificates? Are you trying to force my hand? If you want a fight you can have it."

Bevinism blighted the idea of Anglo-Jewish co-operation to which Weizmann had devoted not merely his career, but his whole personality. Others, who loved Britain less, or did not love her at all, would take over the task of wresting out of the Foreign Secretary's knotted hands that national independence which Weizmann had so confidently entrusted to Britain just 30 years before. Was that confidence really misplaced? *Trial and Error* leaves the tragic question unanswered.

R. H. S. Crossman

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* *Trial and Error*. By Chaim Weizmann. *Hamish Hamilton.* 21s.

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SHAW'S PERSONA

Sixteen Self Sketches. By BERNARD SHAW. *Constable. 7s. 6d.*

Days with Bernard Shaw. By S. WINSTEN. *Hutchinson. 18s.*

Many years ago, W. H. Rivers, the scientist and anthropologist, told me that the most enjoyable holiday of his life was spent on board a ship, which in mid-winter brought him and Bernard Shaw back to England from the West Indies. (Shaw will certainly tell me if I've got the details wrong). For long hours every day they walked the decks, Rivers no doubt contributing—he was an excessively shy man—from his unique store of knowledge about the strange behaviour of men, and Shaw thinking aloud, strenuously striving to work out his philosophy of man and society. When they reached England, the reporters came on board. It was, Rivers told me, exactly as if Shaw had suddenly enveloped himself in an overcoat and false beard and decided on the part to play. The thinker, whom Rivers had known, had vanished. The G.B.S. of the newspapers was saying: "Now, why should I be in England at Christmas time? I have far too much respect for the Christian religion to wish to take part in a pagan festival . . ." and so on and so on.

Necessarily, public men grow a *persona,* an external personality for the world, which is part vanity and part self-defence. In really bad cases, like that of Ramsay MacDonald, who, as Bernard Shaw once said, thought he ought to be perpetual Prime Minister because he had three false registers in his voice, the *persona* overwhelms the soul it is supposed to protect. The voice reverberates: the real man is no more than a dried pea shaken about, helpless within the hollow drum. The danger of some such fate is always before the actor and platform performer. It is wise, like Shaw, to pay conscious and artistic attention to the *persona*: the process of creative thought and intimate relationship can then proceed unnoticed and undisturbed.

Shaw is always at it. These *Sixteen Self Sketches* tell us little new about the mountebank (Shaw's own word for his *persona*) and less about the inside Shaw. We learn once again from photographs, as well as from Shaw, that his mother was a most remarkable woman and his father a drunkard—a fact which may have something to do with Chesterton's discovery that Shaw's Puritanism is æsthetic in origin. We learn that he went for a time to a school with Roman Catholic children of no class. Here are a few more details about his days as a clerk—far the most intriguing being that he taught his fellow-clerks to sing Grand Opera with him, much to the astonishment of their seniors. He tells us again about his Marxian and Fabian beginnings, enlarges on his success as a street-corner speaker, and completes the picture with an informative essay in which he tells Frank Harris what he ought to have said about Bernard Shaw. Some may learn with surprise how large a part in his life music has played. This is not part of the *persona*: music is vital to the innermost Shaw; he can now safely tell people that Beethoven, Mozart and, oddly perhaps, Wagner, have been even more important to him than William Morris and the Webbs. For music began when he was very young. I believe there is no part of his career of which Mr. Shaw is so proud, and so justly proud, as the period when he wrote magnificently under the preposterous pseudonym of Corno di Bassetto.

Days with Bernard Shaw is quite a different kettle of fish. The Winstens are near neighbours of Shaw's; in recent years they have been permitted to give him that measure of companionship which, as an Ancient, is all he will accept from his fellow-mortals. Mrs. Winsten is a very reputable artist, and if Mr. Winsten's reports of his talks with G.B.S. are not exactly or always to the taste of Shavians, that, to be fair, is not his fault. It was characteristic of Shaw to refuse to read the book before publication (as I suppose he must have done) and then to write to *The Times Literary Supplement* to correct it in detail, and at the same time to do so with so much good humour that no one, not even the luckless author, could really permit himself any hurt feelings. There are, in fact, valuable passages in this book for students of Shaw; the most interesting are those in which Shaw, free of the necessity of showing off to the public, thinks aloud and often comes to conclusions, on education, for instance, which do not fit with any of his many earlier published views.

We must also be grateful to Mr. Winsten for a superb collection of photographs of Shaw. No man has ever been so drawn, painted and sculptured. No man has been more vain about his appearance, his magnificent carriage and figure, his beard and voice and superb enunciation (part of his musical education). No man was ever more justified in such vanity. It is part of the *persona.* Looking in a mirror with whimsical appreciation of G.B.S. has never damaged the Bernard Shaw who wrote *Man and Superman.*

KINGSLEY MARTIN

CRIME

Shade of Time. By DAVID DUNCAN. *Grey Walls Press. 8s. 6d.*

False Bounty. By STEPHEN RANSOME. *Gollancz. 8s. 6d.*

The Pricking Thumb. By H. C. BRANSON. *Bodley Head. 8s. 6d.*

Bland Beginning. By JULIAN SYMONS. *Gollancz. 8s. 6d.*

Buried for Pleasure. By EDMUND CRISPIN. *Gollancz. 8s. 6d.*

More Work for the Undertaker. By MARGERY ALLINGHAM. *Heinemann. 9s. 6d.*

Death in Clairvoyance. By JOSEPHINE BELL. *Longmans. 9s. 6d.*

The Banquet Ceases. By MARY FITT. *MacDonald. 8s. 6d.*

Villain With a Smiling Cheek. By PAUL MURRAY. *Gollancz. 9s. 6d.*

Behind Dark Shutters. By JOHN DRUMMOND. *Duckworth. 8s. 6d.*

The writers of detection are riddled with occupational diseases. Not a single book on this list can boast a clean bill of health. The unwarrantable coincidence, the all-too-obvious clue, the inadequate motive, the arbitrary solution, the impossible people with improbable habits—here they all come again. And, as if these old bugbears were not enough to plague us, a couple of most respectable authors tumble over themselves to conjure up the supernatural.

Mr. David Duncan, a new American author, deserves first place for his power to grip the reader and hold him in feverish suspense. In *Shade of Time* there are seven suspects, with a good motive for each, and what appears to be a physical impossibility. John Harth was shot with an arrow—rather an unexpected manner of death for a scientist—but did the arrow first pass through a pane of glass without breaking it? Would a theory of Atomic Displacement account for that? I ask you. And I may tell you that Mr. Duncan's scientific jargon has been vetted by a Doctor of Pacific University, California; so it should be good. The plot whizzes along to the finale. But at the last gasp, when it comes to the mundane question of who shot the arrow, Mr. Duncan fobs us off with an arbitrary solution and the criminal's confession. *Shade of Time* deserved a better fate.

False Bounty makes a brisk start: "By two o'clock Thursday afternoon I had completed my arrangements for murdering Lydia": and if Mr. Ransome (another new American writer) could have kept his punches going at that rate all would

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CHAPMAN & HALL

have been well. As this is not *Malice Aforethought* but detection, Lydia naturally declines to be murdered that afternoon; and the hero lands himself in a pretty fix. But here the author has to reach for the long hand of coincidence to pull the plot into shape. This fortuitous help and the *longueurs* of the hero's self-reproaches for his murderous incompetence take some of the shine off the book. But you can always skip the hero's soliloquies. Mr. Ransome's brilliantly original method of murder makes *False Bounty* a work that no detective enthusiast should miss.

The publisher claims for Mr. Branson that "he puts his cards fairly on the table." Indeed he does; and earns our full respect for straight dealing. But he would have been better advised in *The Pricking Thumb* not to put the villain down face upwards. This is John Bent's second case; a well-contrived triple murder up-country in America, solved at a jog-trot.

The plot of *Bland Beginning* derives from the famous forgeries of Victorian first editions, attributed to the late A. J. Wise. In this case a forged Victorian pamphlet becomes the clue to three murders. Can anyone see the connection? Mr. Symons thinks he can. He writes with strange fervour, and lays on the bibliography with a trowel, but the disarming enthusiasm hardly atones for the cardinal weakness of motive.

The less said about Crispin's latest, the better for his reputation. There was a picaresque tinge in some of the earlier books. In *Buried for Pleasure* the author frankly unbuttons, and lets Professor Fen run riot as a Parliamentary candidate at a rural bye-election. Behind the scenes, as it were, a woman has been blackmailed and murdered. But don't let that divert you from the fun: just spare a passing glance to identify the obvious culprit. The high spot of the entertainment involves a comic madman, a comic clergyman, comic poltergeists and a comic pig. The last chapter literally brings down the house.

The trio of ladies suffer from specifically feminine complaints besides the ills that all detective flesh seems heir to. For Miss Allingham and Miss Fitt stocks and shares are the source of the trouble. Ignorance about the workings of the Stock Exchange may be no disgrace to womanhood, but it cannot be allowed to justify patent absurdities. Miss Allingham, for instance, implies that a block of shares can be bought for £5 in the market and yet be worth a fortune to a murderer. The motive in *More Work for the Undertaker* depends on this financial jiggery-pokery for its validity. Miss Fitt apparently fancies that a share can slump in the middle of the night without anyone knowing about it. There is a dramatic moment in *The Banquet Ceases* when Sir Matthew, at 10 p.m., learns that he has just lost several thousand on 'Change. One is reminded of Ouida's wonderful boat-race, when "all the crew rowed fast, but none as fast as stroke." Josephine Bell is afflicted with hypertrophy of the maternal instinct. The pages of *Death in Clairvoyance* are littered to excess with the charm of children; and she even ropes the little ones in for a game of detection on their own.

The plots of these three books merit no more than cursory notice. In *More Work for the Undertaker* Miss Palinode, a member of one of the oddest families ever envisaged, is exhumed and found to have been poisoned. The motive, as I have said before, is invalid, so I advise the reader to concentrate on how the poison got inside her. If Albert Campion (whose hair has become silvered in the service of his country and of Miss Allingham) had bothered to do that, he would never have had to cut his way to a solution for 300 pages through a jungle of inconsequence. *Death in Clairvoyance* means, alas! what it says. A clairvoyant lady foresees a murder at a masked ball an hour or so before it actually occurs; and makes another call on her paranormal faculty to help David Wintringham solve the case. Precognition (whether Miss Bell likes to believe in it or not) is about as useful an adjunct to detection as cheating is to card games. If she tries it on again, she will be able to see another discouraging review coming towards her. *The Banquet Ceases*, with its extravagant picture of high life among the high financiers, is readable enough. Miss Fitt can be relied on for some lively characters and some startling events—the most startling being reserved for the finale, when a deathbed confession divulges that Superintendent Mallett and the reader have solved the case all wrong.

Villain with a Smiling Cheek is a competent, well-written thriller; in which the hero diagnoses the death of an American Red Cross girl in a Vienna tube-train as murder, and proceeds to thwart a Nazi plot, while rescuing a delightful Austrian girl from the villains' clutches.

Behind Dark Shutters is a romantic novel based on a series of murders in a Stirlingshire mining village sixty years ago. Mr. Drummond revives the atmosphere of the place and period with an artistic touch and gives enough twist to the tail of his crime story to make it a pleasant diversion from the rut of detection.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

GORKI

The Young Maxim Gorki. By FILIA HOLTZMAN. *Columbia University Press (Geoffrey Cumberlege)*. 16*s*.

To English readers a certain ambiguity has attached itself to the name of Maxim Gorki. All his important works have been translated, and the bare facts of his life are well enough known, yet, for us, both the man and the writer have hung for sometime in a kind of uneasy suspension, awaiting the definitive biography, the definitive critical study. We know him principally for his early stories and for his famous reminiscences of Tolstoy, Chehov and Andreyev. But we know also that he was the intimate friend of Lenin and that he was proclaimed as both the doyen and the founder of Soviet literature. It is this later period for which we were the more in need of information, for we had heard many rumours of his disagreements with the bolshevik regime, many suggestions that tuberculosis was not the only motive for his retreat to Italy, and we may even remember that his name reappeared dramatically at the first of the great Moscow trials. Was there not at least one of those Fascist reptiles who confessed to the murder of Maxim Gorki?

Miss Holtzman does little to satisfy our curiosity on all this. Her useful little study confines itself to the period from 1868 to 1902, and when she ventures into the later period she writes with a caution which whets our appetite by the suspicion it engenders that she may know more than she has wished to say. This is a confused and repetitive book, descriptive rather than critical. Far too many of Miss Holtzman's pages are devoted to summaries of Gorki's stories; far too few of her sentences hazard a genuine critical opinion. She is "for" her subject, as we gather from the first page of her study, but this kind of warm-hearted approbation needs a powerful critical apparatus to sustain it. Yet the book is a useful prelude to the bolder and more scholarly work which is now long overdue. We are provided with biographical information in a palatable form, and there are enough contemporary quotations, both from and about Maxim Gorki, to justify the book's publication, if not its price.

Indeed, important facts can be extracted from the book, singularly ill-arranged though they are. We discover a young Gorki who curiously belied his nom de plume. There is more bitterness in Gogol, in Dostoevsky, in the later Tolstoy and even in Chehov than we shall ever find in the

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works of Gorki. Both as man and as writer he is outraged, defiant, *furious* rather than bitter, and his love and admiration for man is constantly proclaimed in terms which are almost indistinguishable from Whitman's:

> In the heavy hour of spirit's great weariness, I summon before me through the force of my imagination the sublime image of Man.
> Man! I dream him a new sun arisen in my soul . . .
> Onward he marches—free, proud man . . .
> All for Man! All through man!
> Free and majestic with head uplifted high,
> Man is marching again steadily onward on the uncharted ways.

In translation the merits of Gorki's poetry do not emerge very clearly, and although Miss Holtzman speaks indulgently of it, one is left with the suspicion that Gorki's early preoccupation with verse was a misdirection of his talent. Yet he is even more explicit in his verse than in his stories, and the verse quotations which are given in this book greatly help to illuminate this attractive, vigorous and rather simple-minded man.

Though it is doubtful whether this was the author's intention, the portrait which emerges from this study is of a man who had no clear picture of what he was doing, of why he was doing it or of where it was leading him. Politically he was a natural anarchist, and the heroes of his early and best stories are invariably tramps, outcasts, "antisocial types." Indeed he began as a disciple of Byron, even with Nietzschean sympathies, and it wasn't until many years after the close of the period examined here that he drifted rather uneasily into the social-democratic and later into the Bolshevik camp. This submission to the exigencies of a political party was by no means the end of him as a creative writer, for it was in later life that he wrote his magnificent memoirs and the reputable *Klim Samghin*. But the Gorki who came so near to the giant stature of his great predecessors was the young, unspoiled writer of the early stories. Here he showed himself to be that rare phenomenon in the history of fiction, the naive creator. Not that he was unself-conscious, not that he lacked theories about the nature of art and life, but that he wrote without the support of these theories. His choice of folk-lore as the basis for so many of his stories was not made because of his many theories in favour of folk-lore, but because this was a natural field of activity for this unusually natural man.

Nor do we confront in Gorki that common and lamentable phenomenon, the creative writer who has been destroyed by an itch to prophesy. He was a true prophet, in the denunciatory Old Testament sense of the word, and he was also a true writer. There was no conflict here, and the lesson of Gorki's early life and work lies in the total absence there of any dichotomy. We have brooded too much on the relationship between writing and living, and whether we have concluded that art is above and beyond life or that art must be subordinated to life, we emerge from these cogitations with a heavy burden of self-consciousness. To Gorki, far more naturally than to Tolstoy, the writer was indivisible. Living and writing were not to be separated, for they were parallel and interdependent activities. He would no more have allowed that art should be subjected to political ends than he would have tolerated that humiliation of art which places it on a pedestal to die of starvation.

Yet Gorki was a poor theorist, as the quotations in this book constantly demonstrate. In 1900 he wrote: "What is the basic problem of art and literature? Is it not to make an impression in colours and words of that which is best, most beautiful, most honourable and most noble in man?" The simplification is a gross one, and there is no evidence that the over-simple theory in any way influenced the spontaneous yet extremely subtle practice. In later life Gorki's theories became more disingenuous, and more dangerous. In an essay of 1915 in defence of collective art he writes: "Only by embracing the total thinking of a whole people is it possible to create such broad generalisations as Prometheus, Satan, Hercules, Sviatogor, Ilia, Mikula. . . ." This involves a confusion, surely deliberate, between two very different things. A collective image emerges fitfully over a period of centuries, to find at last its Aeschylus or Milton. This has been the natural process by which great art has been created, a marvellous and subtle co-operation between generations of society and a single catalytic individual. But to recommend the conscious co-operation of many individuals in the creation of a work of art is a different and a naive proposition. Gorki's theories deserve less attention than Miss Holtzman has allowed them. For English readers. his life and his literary practice are still to be fully explored.

PHILIP TOYNBEE

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RELIGIOUS REBELS

The Christian Origins of Social Revolt. By WILLIAM DALE MORRIS. *Allen & Unwin.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

The Wisdom of John Woolman. By REGINALD REYNOLDS. *Allen & Unwin.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Orthodoxy has been chasing heresy down the centuries and has never quite caught up with it: it never can. Social changes always keep the heretics one jump ahead.

Nothing better illustrates this problem than the alternation of dogma and heresy in the Christian Church: Engels, Weber and Tawney have taught us to look for the social struggles behind these theological disputes. The economic grievances of the German or English peasants in the Middle Ages may seem more important to us than the doctrinal niceties of the Anabaptists or the Lollards. Winstanley's importance lies in his social theory rather than in the theological verbiage that cloaked it. But, although we know that this relationship between what Marx called the substructure and superstructure exists—and this somewhat clumsy formulation half-answered the vital question of primacy as soon as it was posed, thus providing Marxists with an easy but mechanical solution for two generations—the problem is more complex than that, as Marxists are now aware. While we can still clarify whole periods of history by using the traditional Marxist technique as a general rule, we now need a much more meticulous and penetrating analysis of the links between environment and ideology. At present, we can state that the links exist, but until we know more about the mental processes which convert experience into philosophy, our understanding of class and social consciousness—and the behaviour that follows—will be largely confined to *post hoc* rationalisations.

Mr. Morris is adept at such rationalisations. His book traces the history of religious radicalism from the Middle Ages to our own time, running through the peasant heresies and revolts, the Levellers and Diggers, the evangelists of the Industrial Revolution and Kingsley's Christian Socialism, to Nonconformity and the modern Labour Party. For each group he has a snap judgment:

> Calvinism was admirably suited to help the capitalist in his struggle with the Anabaptists and to discipline the new proletariat. Its classification of souls into a minority of Elect and a majority of Damned corresponded with the economic division into a few employers and a mass of workers.

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> The Taborites were many centuries before their time: communism was not possible until capitalism had overthrown the feudal order, and had accumulated the capital which made possible the industrial revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries.

> They (the Levellers) were two centuries and more before their time. The class whose interests they championed was still too immature to win and hold political power.

There is sufficient point to assertions of this kind, with which the book is heavily sprinkled, to make it an interesting and provocative summary of part of the subject, provided the reader moves on rapidly to authors who are less anxious to pack everything in neat parcels. But, to judge from the slipshod and confusing way in which Mr. Morris uses such terms as "capitalism" and "proletariat," he seems content to explain the relation of the ideologies he discusses to their contemporary social conditions in the most mechanical way. This would matter less if his own comments were not sandwiched between long quotations from a number of authors, ranging from Max Beer, Petegorsky and Bernstein, to Tawney, Cole, the Hammonds and Canon Raven, who are dragged in to provide most of the evidence, while Mr. Morris, standing before the witnesses he calls, points out the moral in case the reader misses it.

In other words, Mr. Morris has chosen an excellent subject, but has failed to cast much new light on it. His summary is very uneven. Why concentrate on the peasant sects of England, Germany and Bohemia at the expense of the broader aspects of the Reformation? Why pick out the Levellers and omit any serious discussion of English Puritanism as a whole? Mr. Morris plumps every time for the more radical groups and dismisses the moderates, Luther and Cromwell, for instance, as conservative faint-hearts who preferred protecting property to carrying on with the revolution. Men who were, in his favourite phrase, "before their time," may be more colourful and dramatic, but to confine a study of the relationship between Christianity and social revolt in the main to splinter groups is to eliminate the most fruitful, though most complex, field for research. This tendency is especially marked in the treatment of the Industrial Revolution. Mr. Morris might have told us much more about the link between Tory Democracy and High Church theology—a vital factor in British politics in the nineteenth century. But his most striking error is his abrupt dismissal of Nonconformity which, he informs us:

> . . . exercised a baneful influence on the political education of the working class, and helped to delay the formation of an independent political party of their own long after economic conditions were ripe for such a development.

Here Mr. Morris missed the chance to assess just how important a part Dissent played in the building of the reform movements of the last century. From the time of the Corresponding Societies onwards, the chapels have provided a steady stream of trained radicals who formed the core of movement after movement. Mr. Morris may dislike their politics, but they cannot airily be dismissed. I wish I could commend this book more highly, because the author has had good intentions. But, where simplicity is inadequate, it is usually misleading.

John Woolman, the Quaker from New Jersey, who wore undyed clothes because dyes were made by slaves, and who refused to use the mail in England after he had seen the ill-treatment of post boys, was a follower of William Penn and a neighbour of Benjamin Franklin. Few men, I suppose, have tried as earnestly to live out a philosophy opposed equally to wealth and violence. Through this essay on the life, and the attitude to life, of Woolman, Mr. Reynolds skips along, pointing a moral here, making a digression there. If Woolman himself is sometimes pushed into the background by Mr. Reynolds, no matter. This is an attractive and, sometimes, rather moving testament from two Quaker critics.

NORMAN MACKENZIE

THE COUNTY BOOKS

Herefordshire. By H. L. V. FLETCHER. *Hale.* 15s.

Fell Days. By GRAHAM SUTTON. *Museum Press.* 12s. 6d.

The English Heritage. By REX WELLDON FINN. *Macdonald.* 12s. 6d.

A Picture Book of The Whole Coast of England and Wales. By J. A. STEERS. Introduction by F. Fraser Darling. *Cambridge University Press.* 10s. 6d.

Reading these books, and contrasting the first three with the last, has left me heavy with an unreasonable conviction that nothing should be published that is not genuinely imaginative or informative, controversial, or just trash. That all writers should either have been subjected to the greatest possible rigours of a classical or scientific training or have been left to scare crows. So many of us are lured or pushed step by step into this dubious border country, this smatterland where there is neither learning, simplicity nor art. Unquestionably at the present time we should be better employed in trenching potatoes or raising pigs. Yet it is precisely because few people are able to lead a country life that there is a great and apparently uncritical demand for country books. A town population without roots in time or place tries to find locality and tradition in written words.

The range of the present books is such that they could provide a representative study of the country. One deals with a green and deeply rural lowland county, one with that most characteristic region of the highland zone, the Cumberland Fells, while the third, concerned with the coasts, completes the familiar portrait of Britain by drawing an outline round the whole. Finally, *The English Heritage* adds the history that should give it depth and feeling. Yet the portrait is a weak one.

This example of the County Books series made me hanker after a conventional guide, down to its last tyrannical star. Mr. Fletcher speaks harshly of "guide-book tourists" who gape at churches rather than gaining insight from the more natural contacts with the country that he and his family were able to enjoy as they drove where they fancied in their little car. It is a justifiable point of view, but happily no books are needed for its satisfaction. That is why it is possible to prefer the bowler-hatted stiffness of a guide speaking only when consulted, to the slightly pushing garrulity of a boon companion in tweeds. *Herefordshire* ambles on, often agreeably, from local characters and ghost stories to birds and buildings, from time to time introducing odd pieces of history, country lore and personal reminiscence. The passages dealing with rural pursuits such as salt and cider-making are to my mind the most successful.

Mr. Sutton begins his first chapter with the conjunction "but," and remains frankly journalistic in manner. He is intimately familiar with the fells and is evidently an experienced rock-climber. Among his climbing yarns and tales of the country and its people he has interspersed a number of short stories, ranging from the sensations of a hunted murderer to an adventure told by a foxhound possessed of unusual sensibility and intellect.

The English Heritage, re-issued in a revised form after more than ten years, is sincerely written and gives an adequate impression of some aspects of our history. The early sections, however,

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(and they are substantial enough to be taken seriously) might have been written before the age of scientific archæology, while the chapter entitled the *Puritan Legacy* is marred by the most extraordinary lack of understanding of English architecture. Of domestic builders from the seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century, Mr. Finn says "they erected walls, and covered the interior with a roof, inserted windows and doors where necessary and called the result a house." Greenwich Hospital "looks like one of those stone-faced rectangular provincial hotels," while the buildings of the age in general are "often a series of misfits."

The Whole Coastline of England and Wales claims to be no more than a picture book, but is by far the most valuable work of the four. The photographs from Mr. Steers' great coastal survey, published in 1946, have been brought together, added to, and given concise notes. They are introduced by a characteristic essay from Mr. Fraser Darling and an account of types of coastal formation that Mr. Steers describes as "a lantern lecture on coastal physiography." It is an unusually good lecture, just as the illustrations are better than the average lantern slides. The plates follow the English and Welsh coastlines from Cumberland to Northumberland, while a key map makes it possible to identify the locality of each picture. Turning the pages, one travels down the jagged western seaboard with its various but always magnificent cliff exposures of the palæozoic rocks, then along the mild sweeps of the younger formation of the south and east coasts, until the palæozoic is regained in the limestone of the Northumberland cliffs. Here everything is brief and precise, brought down if not to rock bottom, then to Bunter Pebble Beds, Aberystwyth Grits and the Ferruginous Beds of Blackgang Chine.

One theme is common to all four authors; the shameful mutilation already done to the natural and artificial beauty of this country and the threat of future outrage. If these books can rouse and arm more people to defend Britain from unnecessary corruption and ugliness, then certainly their publication is well justified.

JACQUETTA HAWKES

A LOST REPUTATION

Martin Tupper. His Rise and Fall. By DEREK HUDSON. *Constable.* 18s.

At Windsor in 1854, *tableaux* were presented by the Royal children for their parents' wedding anniversary. "In the clouds at the back," the Queen noted in her Journal, "stood dear little Lenchen, reciting very pretty verses specially written for the purpose by Mr. Martin Tupper." Mr. Tupper was, indeed, a favourite poet not only of the Royal Household but of the nation. The sales of his *Proverbial Philosophy* in England alone provided handsome incomes for himself and his publishers over a quarter of a century. Tenniel, Birket Foster, Severn, Dalziel and eleven other leading artists were glad to contribute to the illustrated edition of 1852. The American journalist N. P. Willis wrote to him: "Your name is a classic amongst us. They quote you in every one of our 1,400 newspapers constantly." Even during the Civil War, Senators found time to write to him for his autograph. Had he received any money from the vast American sales—they came to nearly a million—he would have been rich indeed.

But who, many people will ask to-day, was Tupper? Parody and sarcasm the poet lived long enough to know, but this question, sixty years after his death in 1889, he could not have envisaged. Mr. Derek Hudson, who discovered Tupper's copious scrapbooks in a Bloomsbury bookshop, has answered it in an admirable biography.

Tupper's story could hardly belong to any other period. Born in 1810, the son of a successful doctor, he was at Charterhouse with Thackeray ("never a friend of mine: very jealous and sarcastic"), and at Oxford with Gladstone, whom he defeated in a competition for a theological prize. Here he wrote verses busily ("Stop, desperate youth, and dash the wine-cup down!" is a typical sentiment); denied himself sugar "by way of somehow discouraging the slave trade," and was, according to Gladstone, "a good youth, spotted as a 'saint,' and little known or heeded." ("Dear, splendid, capital, Glad.," begins the first letter of their fifty-year-long correspondence. Gladstone's replies, even at this stage, were invariably formal.) A bad stammer, which disappeared about fifteen years later, the time of his greatest success, prevented him from entering the Church. At twenty-five he was called to the Bar, married his cousin Isabelle, to whom he had been for several years engaged, and settled down, like a "good" character at the end of a Dickens novel, to found a large family which he supported by writing verse. Contemporary descriptions increase the Dickensian effect: his busy-ness ("Even if he were sitting still, he had the effect of bustling about"); his geniality ("There was a mild twinkle in the dark reflective eye, and a beaminess all over the face which captivated one"). He was, we might add, undoubtedly a handsome man. His activity, whether it went into archæology or invention, was inexhaustible. His promptness in celebrating public occasions in verse was an embarrassment to Tennyson, the official Laureate, who was always finding his offerings anticipated. Such events as the Great Exhibition:

> When Labour honoured openly, and not alone by stealth,
> With horny hand and glowing heart may greet his brother Wealth.

stirred Tupper's most frenzied poetic enthusiasm. He drew, too; some of his drawings have a wild interest that the writing, with its awful facility, lacks. He campaigned for volunteer "rifle clubs," not only in case of invasion, but because, like cricket, they would "mingle class with class." He worked energetically for better treatment for animals, for Anglo-American friendship, and for the abolition of slavery. He wrote a national anthem for the new republic of Liberia (is it still in use?), and presented a gold medal for Liberian literary achievement. He planted "mummy wheat" from a tomb, and it grew. He speculated on methods of flying. He was fêted in America, and was, even when out of popular favour, an object of pilgrimage and the recipient of laudatory poems. He pasted the most vituperative cuttings in his scrapbook, and thought that his name would never die.

Proverbial Philosophy, the basis of his success ("one solid, sparkling, priceless gem," a Cincinnati newspaper called it), was published when he was twenty-eight, and written even earlier. Just before going to Oxford, he relates, he decided "to transcribe my notions on the holy estate of matrimony for the special use and behoof of Isabelle. A letter was too light, and a formal Essay too heavy; so I thought I would convey my sentiments in the manner of Solomon's proverbs." The complete edition, some of it added in later years, contains over a hundred essays on such matters as Love, Marriage, Humility, Self-Acquaintance, written in a form of free verse not unlike that of Whitman, whose style he is said to have influenced. As for its popularity—the gnomic utterance, whatever its theme, has a kind of hypnotic power, and Tupper's pontifical but goodhearted sentiments certainly satisfied an early Victorian need. Whether or not this is the business of poetry is another matter.

Tupper followed his own precepts, and met the

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troubles of his later life with philosophic fortitude. His works ceased to sell, and he lost money on unfortunate investments. The two youngest of his nine children died when less than two years old, and his son Henry was killed in South Africa at the age of twenty-four. More painful still was the career of the eldest son, Martin, Captain Tupper of the 29th Foot, a record, his father admitted, of "sad dissipation." There were the large gambling debts, the "bad women," the severe illness (delirium tremens), the shipping off to Brazil, finally his death in London at the age of thirty-seven. Victorian fiction does not seem to be exaggerated. A further source of difficulty came, surprisingly, from Mrs. Tupper, who appears to have gone through a period of violent (and unfounded) jealousy and "evil propensities," and to have required the attendance of a nurse. But Victorian matrons had, after all, much to endure. And then, in the more cynical Sixties and Seventies, the new sport of Tupper-baiting needed all the poet's resilience to face. Its virulence suggests that critics were scourging not so much Tupper as themselves for their one-time naivety of taste.

Mr. Hudson has given a fair selection of the best of Tupper's verse, and has estimated it honestly enough. Indeed, for so prolific a writer, Tupper, whose particular assets were spontaneity and enthusiasm, has left curiously few outstanding lines. He appears on Victorian tombstones, but, as far as I am aware, in no anthology other than *The Stuffed Owl.* Even here, he uses words too diffusely to be a good *bad* poet. Yet he undoubtedly gave pleasure and a spiritual prop to countless people, the Prince Consort, General Gordon, Kingsley, Tom Hughes, Mark Twain, Ainsworth and Spurgeon among them. He was absolutely sincere; his success, moreover, was gained from work embodying nothing more sensational than piety, humaneness and the domestic virtues. Where, indeed, is the line to be drawn between poetry and poetastry? By what yardstick is "literature" to be measured? Tupper's story provides much material for this fascinating speculation. In Mr. Hudson's excellent book, moreover, the somewhat absurd name comes to life; it belongs to a man, in his biographer's own words, "provocatively, extravagantly, yet endearingly alive"; a likeable man; one, as Charles Reade said, "unreasonably pitched into." Tupper's works may not be read again in the spirit in which they were written, but he certainly qualifies for a place in the Victorian gallery.

NAOMI LEWIS

ATHENS IN OXFORD STREET

Partnership for All. By JOHN SPEDAN LEWIS. *Kerr-Cross.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. John Spedan Lewis is a torrent. In these 250,000 words of disguised autobiography he writes with the prolixity of a Whitehall draughtsman and says even less; and at the same time he has established a claim to be the first man to write the history of a business partnership in the first person singular.

But he is also a commercial man of genius. It was inevitable that this truly remarkable story of the John Lewis Partnership and its development from the Kippsian business established in Oxford Street by Lewis I should reflect on every page the restless, intolerant personality of the man who took and built on it, Lewis II. The John Lewis cartel, as anyone else might call it, employs 12,000 people and controls over forty companies. Each one of the 12,000, however, is a "partner," and the status entitles him to share the profits (to say nothing of the losses), speak his mind—anonymously if he wants to—about policy, and enjoy all the rights of a shareholder except voting. What distinguishes the partnership from most others is that its chairman retains supreme control, so that many of its major decisions are taken without the privity of the "partners" most affected, and that everyone throughout the organisation is—apparently—as happy as a Buchmanite, and as hearty.

Mr. Spedan Lewis sees the strange entity he has created as an improvement on Robert Owen, a microcosm of the true democratic state, a rag-trade Periclean Athens. In fact, however, it is a patriarchal autocracy directed by an erratic genius who, on the strength of an inheritance that took the personal risk out of experiment, has forced along a vast expansionist scheme to an accompaniment of words, words, words; the willing victim of his own eloquence, he has a bludgeon ready for every critic. The eloquence finds weekly expression in the *John Lewis Gazette*, which he founded in 1918 to play the role of "The Press" in his model democracy, but which, to judge from the enormous extracts that appear in this book, must be written almost entirely by himself.

Partnership For All is worth reading for two reasons. First, it could serve as a cockshy for any English master dealing with tautology, punctuation, and platitude; secondly, although it omits the really vital figures that would show what "Partnership Benefit" the employees in fact receive, it describes a profit-sharing scheme, complete with Constitution and Rules, from which no doubt valuable conclusions could be drawn in relation to the current search for incentives in industry—Sir Stafford Cripps might well turn one of his working parties upon it. From it there also emerges the self-portrait of an extraordinary man, half-Mogul, half-visionary, whose belief in himself is only less than his belief in the power of written words—provided he writes them.

C. H. ROLPH

Week-end Competitions

No. 997

Set by Naomi Lewis

Brigadier F. E. Hotblack (Delphinium) semi-double mauve shaded blue, prominent black eye; vigorous grower, resistant to mildew, etc.

Prizes are offered for a brief horticultural description of three flowers, named after any three well-known contemporary persons. Entries by April 5th.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 994

Set by Sebastian

Competitors are asked to imagine that Falstaff, Micawber, Robinson Crusoe, Oblomov, Mrs. Gamp, Lady Teazle or Jane Austen's Emma is alive today and urgently seeking employment. The usual prizes will be awarded for a letter from any one of these applying for an appointment and setting out their qualifications.

Report by Sebastian

In a large entry Falstaff was overwhelmingly the popular applicant, Emma Woodhouse and Lady Teazle the only failures. I would have thought the competent and bossy Emma would have provoked some good letters, but she appeared chiefly as a faintly distressed lady, disturbed (as Lady Teazle was) by the death duties and, in most entries, betraying little notion that she had a mind of her own. A. G., Michael Orsler and Sylvia Tatham did best with these ladies, and Mrs. Tatham had a nice malicious postcript warning advertisers against Mrs. George Knightly who "were better employed, so say the Tea Tables, conducting a Matrimonial Agency at Donwell." Robinson Crusoe had good sponsors in L. G. Udall ("For many years I was in sole charge of development on Juan Fernandez"), R. J. P. Hewison and J. Angus Mackay. Micawber drew masterly ambiguities from J. F. Denny and Peter Sheldon. There were several brilliant Sairey Gamps, one from Allan M. Laing who is among the runners up with Richard Fenwick

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